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FATHER BUNNY AND HIS BIRDS

Laura Rountree Smith

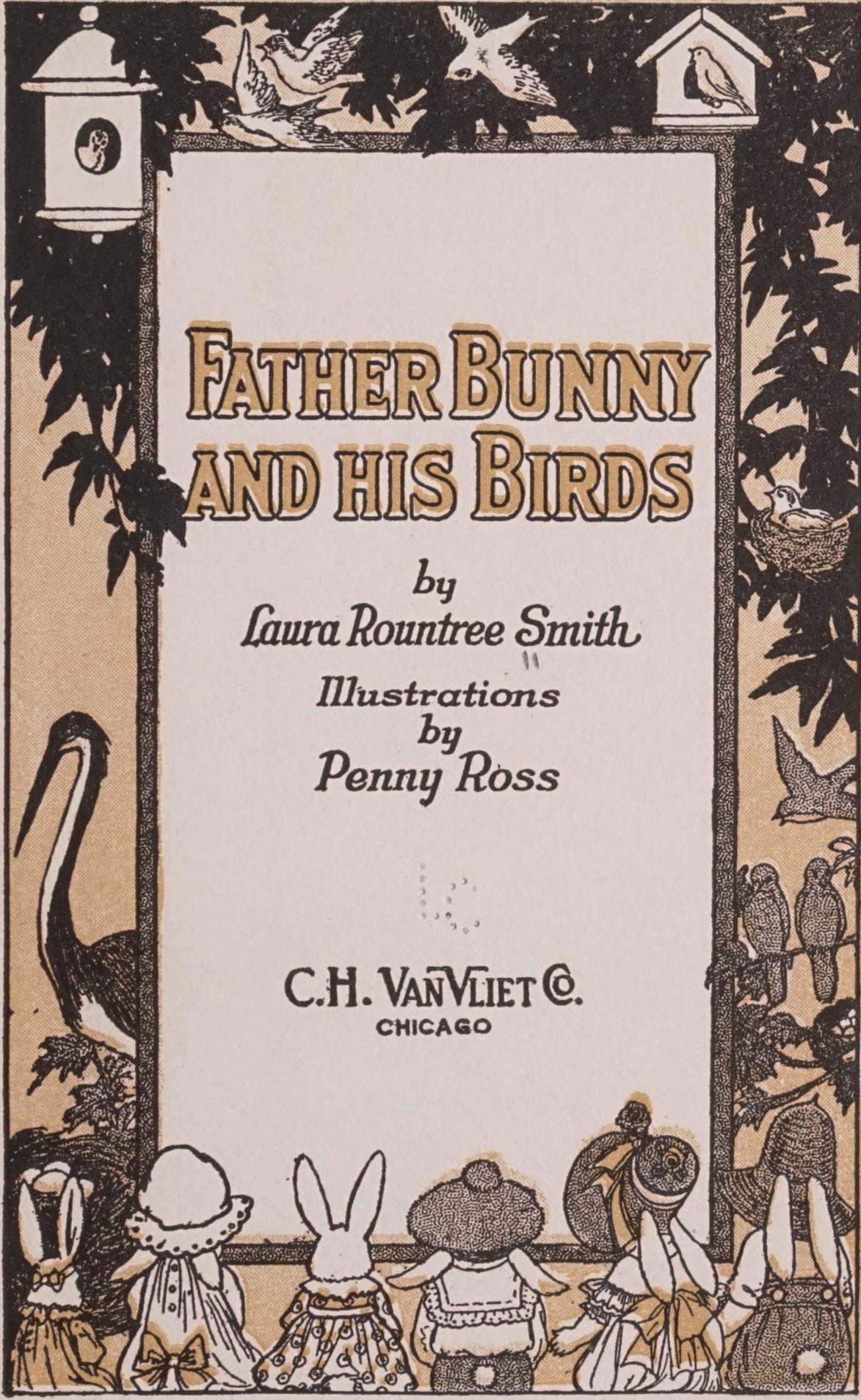


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Father Bunny



FATHER BUNNY AND HIS BIRDS

by
Laura Rountree Smith

Illustrations
by
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C.H. VAN VLIET &
CHICAGO

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CHAPTER I

EARLY VISITORS

Hark to the tale of Father Bunny!
If you think his story funny,
Then I will introduce to you
His little Bird friends fond and true.

Old Father Bun woke early one morning and said,

“I am so happy in the spring,
For soon we’ll hear the Robin sing.”

Old Mother Bun looked out the window and said,

“Home again, home again,
Here comes Robin in the rain!”

Sure enough, there was Father Robin in a tree, and soon he began to sing a joyful song,

“Old friends I’m always glad to see;
I belong to the Thrush Family.”

Old Father Bun was so excited he ran

out to greet Father Robin, and he never even thought to put on his rain-coat and rubbers!

Father Robin sang again,
“I am happy and gay, this is the reason,
For me it’s the migrating season;
You know a Robin thinks it best
To winter in the middle-west.”

Old Father Bun cried,
“Father Robin, why do you leave at all?
Why do you only stay ‘til fall?”

Father Robin replied,
“I’d gladly stay here if I could,
But I have to search for food.”

Sure enough, Father Robin had to go to find fresh berries, and seeds, and insects. He remarked that he would really not care to travel at all if he could find enough food in one place to do for all the year, but he added that he did take little trips always from his nest to his feeding-place. He added, “It would make an interesting story if I would tell you all about our travels but today I am so

busy looking for a place to build a nest, I will only say now that we fly in flocks as we please, by day or night.

Old Mother Bun came out just then with a plate of crumbs and begged Father Robin to build in the tree he was in.

Father Robin said, "All right, I'll see; I always liked a cherry tree."

Old Mother Bun promised him crumbs every day and she said she would give him some strings to use in nest-building too, so Father Robin decided to stay and began to build a nest that very day, singing,

"I am so happy I sing and sing;
I'm one of the first to return in spring."

He took pieces of grass and string and wove them loosely, then he played a joke on Old Mother Bun.

He took mud from a freshly-watered plant in a pot she had set outside. He wanted the mud to line his nest. Back and forth he went from the nest to the flower pot, carrying mud in his bill. What a fine worker he was!

Old Father Bun saw that for the time he was too busy to sing, and remarked,

“You’re very busy, it is clear,
But Robin dear, I’m glad you’re here.”

Father Robin stopped a minute and cocked his head on one side, remarking,
“I am not half as busy as I will be
When I have to feed small birds three.”

He said it would take half his time by and by looking and listening for worms to feed the young birds. He tugged away at an earth-worm that very minute and nearly fell over before he got his meal, he had to pull so hard.

At this very minute a familiar voice was heard.

It was not a song but a loud call, and Mother Blue Jay came scolding as usual.

“I wanted to build my nest in that cherry tree;
I’ve a right, I’ve been here all winter,
you see.”

Sure enough, Mother Bluejay had



been here all winter but she was such a scold that Father Robin paid no atten-

tion to her. She said again, between her shouts,

“I, too, am happy in the spring,
But I was never made to sing.”

How beautiful Mother Blue Jay’s coat and top-knot were! It was a pity she had not a good disposition. She cried out,

“Jay, Jay,” and then added,
“I’m not amiable, you see;
I’m one of the Crow Family.”

This meant that she was really a bold robber.

She took some crumbs that were meant for Father Robin and some nuts that were put out for the Shy Squirrel, then she scolded as though she had been ill-treated, and added, “I often eat eggs belonging to other birds, and sometimes young birds, for it is my nature,” She added,

“If you build in this cherry tree,
You may have me for company.”

The Bunnies thought it very selfish of



He Stopped a Minute and Cocked his Head on
One Side

Mother Blue Jay to talk that way, for there were many trees waiting for the nests.

Scolding as usual, Mother Blue Jay went away and cried out,

“Don’t ask me to sing, that is absurd,
I am only a Perching Bird;
Singers, though, are on the wing,
You’ll always hear them in the spring;
Many birds I, too, have found,
Who eat their food right from the
ground;
More wonderful, though, I declare,
Are birds who feed while in the air.”

Father Robin was glad when the scolding Blue Jay went away.

There was a deep wood back of Old Father Bun’s home and suddenly the most beautiful song was heard!

Old Mother Bun cried,
“Do be quiet, hush, oh hush!
Hear the song of the Wood-Thrush!”

Their new visitor was so shy he did not



come into view, but Father Robin said,
"I can tell you about him, for he is my
cousin, though much smaller than I am.

He travels east, he travels west,
He has about fifty spots on his breast;
I've seen him often, and it's said
That cinnamon-color is his head."

The song of the Wood-Thrush grew
sweeter and sweeter until all the air was
stirred with melody.

Very soon a familiar voice cried,



“Chick-a-dee-dee,” and a tiny bird appeared, singing,

“I’m Chickadee, I must build a house;
I’m sometimes called Black-Capped Tit-mouse.”

Old Mother Bun smiled and remarked,
“This question answer Old Mother Bun,
Did you say ‘house’ just for fun?”

The Chickadee was all smiles and sunshine. He was much amused and said,

“I am so very glad I came;
I really meant a ‘nest’ to name.”

He was a cute little fellow in his black cap, white waistcoat, and bluish coat. He said,

“In North America you see
Six types of birds call “Dee-dee.”

He continued, “I am tiny but a useful bird. I eat up worms that destroy apples; I sometimes eat thirty canker worms for a good square meal!” He said, “I am not afraid of a little cold and stay in some localities all winter.

Across the snow-fields you’ll hear and see

Chick-a-dee-dee, chick-a-dee-dee;
I am not going to tell the reason
I come at nearly every season;
But I’ll still have some hours for play,
For I don’t build ’til the month of May;
With short bill and long tail I don’t
creep,
But very cheerful I always keep.”

All this time Father Robin was building his nest and thinking how happy he would be when his mate joined him.

Many of Father Bun's neighbors came to watch his birds and they saw some birds flying so high overhead they could not tell what they were.

The Bunnies formed a circle round Old Father Bun and watched the Birds flying overhead.

The Chickadee kept on talking and said, "A great poet once wrote about me; his name was 'Emerson.' He said,

'When piped a tiny voice hard by,
Gay and polite, a cheerful cry,
Chic-chic-a-dee, dee, saucy note,
Out of a sound and merry throat,
As if it said, "Good day, good Sir!"
Fine afternoon, old passenger'."

By and by Old Father Bun turned to Father Robin after the other Birds had flown away and asked, "Didn't you get very tired coming from the South? Please tell me more about your travels."

Father Robin replied, "I did not get very tired because we take short trips first to prepare for our longer journey. We fly fast and very high by a regular route and sometimes our little flock rests for a day or two, and, of course, we stop to eat."

He continued,

"Sun and shower altogether,
We will soon have rainbow weather;
Some one is coming o'er the hill,
Beside the Lady Daffodil."

A voice called, "Who? Who? Who?"

Father Robin sang again,
"Don't you hear Woodpecker drumming?
Don't you know that Spring is coming?"

Old Father Bun said,
"Who was it called 'Who? Who?'
I really do not know, do you?"

Old Mother Bun replied,
"To know that voice we really should;
We have lived years in the wild wood."

Old Father Bun said with a chuckle,
"We are happy in this home of ours;
Soon you will be planting flowers."

Old Father Bun always teased her because of her fondness for flowers, and so she quite ignored his question and said,

"Your field glass I will have to borrow;
We will have more visitors tomorrow."

All night long a mysterious voice called,
"Who? Who? Who?"

CHAPTER II

ATTRACTING THE BIRDS

Father Bun said, "I will do it,
Nail on the tree a little suet;
Mother Bun, please watch and see
Who our visitors will be."

Father Bun knew the birds loved suet
so he tied some on the branch of a tree
and nailed some on the tree trunk.

Old Mother Bun watched him and
said,

"You're doing the right thing, I've heard,
To attract some wandering bird."

It was a chilly day, and soon a bird
discovered the suet. He was coming down
the tree-trunk, head downward, and said
merrily,

"Do you like my white breast and gray
gown?
I am Nuthatch, Young Up-Side-Down."



Old Father Bun remarked,

“Little Black Head, what do you say?
Why do you travel down trees that
way?”

Old Mother Bun cried excitedly,
"You're a better climber, I've heard said,
Than Woodpecker in his cap of red."

The Nuthatch was so busy searching for a borer in a tree trunk, that he did not answer for a minute, then he said, "It is really true that I can climb better than the Red-headed Woodpecker because I do not need to cling to the trunk of the tree by my tail. My bill, however, is much like his. See how useful I am to the Friendly Tree. I eat the insects that would otherwise destroy it." He added,

"I am as busy as busy can be;
I know every inch of the Friendly Tree."

The Nuthatch was in a pine tree and was thinking of building a nest there, but he also said as he was naturally a little shy he did not often tell where he intended to build his nest.

Old Mother Bun offered him a chestnut which he held in a crack in the bark of the Friendly Tree, and he soon split it open with his sharp bill.

He said he would be glad when it was warmer and all the birds would come back and then he began to talk about nest building again, for that was the popular subject in spring. He said,

“The Nuthatch cares little for stormy weather,
For his nest is mainly made of feathers.”

Old Mother Bun heard at this minute a distinct “me-ow” and fearing the Terrible Tabby, cried,

“The Terrible Tabby may discover
A Bunny who is not under cover.”

The Nuthatch looked very funny as he listened, holding his head up, for he was still upside down on the tree trunk.

By and by, after the Bunnies had gone into the house they peeped out of the window and Old Mother Bun cried,

“Our fears, as usual, were quite absurd,
It is only our old friend, the Catbird!”

The Catbird then came out and showed himself, for he had decided to build a



nest in some shrubs back of the house. He was a comical fellow and remarked, between his cat-calls,

“Me-ow, me-ow, what do I say?
I wear a dress of slaty-gray;
Look at me, you will not fail
To see my black cap and tail;
Look under my tail coverts, it is said
You will see a spot, brick-red.”

He began again to imitate a cat; then just for fun he began to imitate a

Robin, and ended up with a song all his own, which was very sweet, indeed, ending up with trills. He added,

“Some of my songs are quite absurd,
But I am called a musical Bird.”

Moving his tail wildly up and down, he flew down to the ground and took a dust bath. He began to tell then about his cousin, the Mocking-bird, but Old Mother Bun interrupted him and said,

“Answer me a question, do;
Are your eggs greenish-blue?”

The Catbird nodded in reply, but sang,

“Me-ow, me-ow, I’m off and away;
I will not nest ’til some time in May.”

He might have added that when he did build a nest it would be made largely of paper and rags.

He flew away, and he had been so busy talking that he never noticed the suet at all.

Just then there was a commotion in

the Bird World, for the Shy Squirrel was worrying the Blue Jay and pretending he would rob his nest. All the Birds came to help and flew about scolding until the Shy Squirrel thought it best to go away.

The Shy Squirrel was a terrible tease, but really meant no harm at all. He said,

“Rather mischievous things I do,
But wait till you hear from Brother
Who.”

He meant that the Owl would come some day as an enemy, I am sure, but the little birds knew pretty well how to protect themselves, of course.

When evening came, Old Father and Mother Bun were seated round the fireplace and were just thinking of starting a fire in the grate when there was a great chirping and twittering, and down fell two helpless little black creatures hardly able to fly.

“By my stubby tail,” remarked Old Father Bun. “They are Chimney-Swifts.”

He continued, “I feel in my bones, if



we sit very still they may tell us a story."

Old Mother Bun scolded a little about their bringing down soot, but she wanted to know what they had been doing in her chimney and what they had to say.

So, to the relief of all, Old Mother Chimney-Swift came flying down the chimney after her lost children. She said pleasantly,

"For years and years we've thought it best

In a chimney to build our nest."

Old Father Bun coughed politely but Old Mother Bun had so much curiosity she asked,

"With wings one can travel east or west,
Of what do you really build your nest?"

The Chimney-Swift replied,

"Ha, ha, ha, now since you ask it,
Of twigs I make a bracket-basket."

She told them she did not always build in chimneys but sometimes in hollow trees or caves. She added that she liked to gather twigs while on the wing, and that she glued them together with saliva. Her talk was most interesting. She said,

"I wonder if you understand
I am the most aerial Bird on land."

Neither Father nor Mother Bun knew just what the Chimney-Swift meant by "aerial," so she explained it meant "belonging to the air; and," she continued, "how I enjoy flying through the air and what wonderful wings I have, but I have very weak feet so I have to cling to the

chimney using my tail as a support or prop."

Next day Old Mother Bun called to Old Father Bun to come and see a little bird eating suet.

Old Father Bun said, "He is talking."

The Bird said,

"I'm going away, going in May,
I've stayed all winter, I'll soon away;
I've come to say 'good bye,' it's clear
I stay with you eight months of the
year."

Old Father and Mother Bun went out to talk to the little Snowbirds, for they were very old friends, indeed.

Junco, the Snowbird, was a great joker and he said,

"How many kinds of feathers do you suppose
We wear instead of fur or clothes?"

The Bunnies could not guess so he continued,

“I will talk, I’ve no time to sing;
We have flight feathers on tail and wing,
And every bird really thinks it best
To wear clothing feathers on body and breast;
Our downey feathers, as you suppose,
Really look like fine underclothes;
Then any one who really cares
Can see our thread feathers like hairs.
Some birds have plumes and, altogether,
Birds have at least four kinds of feathers;
To keep our feathers fine we try;
Our plumage we like to wash and dry.
A bird will very seldom fail
To have twelve feathers in his tail.”

The Junco flew about showing his outer white tail feathers, his white vest, and gray suit. He said,

“Every Junco now that passes
Eats seeds of weeds and grasses;
We are watchful for each sound,
But like to eat upon the ground.”

Just as he was going to tell a story,
Old Father Bun said,

“Hush, be still, I hear a sound;
Some one is surely coming round.”

Old Mother Bun said,
“Back into the house let’s go;
An enemy is around, I know.”

A sleepy voice cried, “Who? Who? Who?”

Old Father and Mother Bun went inside and Junco flew away just in time, for the Terrible Tabby crept out from the hiding place in the currant bushes, and even the Sparrows who were always around flew away.

Old Mother Bun said,
“Why do you suppose some birds creep
Close to the tree trunk when they
sleep?”

Old Father Bun said,
“Why is it now, do you really suppose,
They sleep on their feet, and stand on
their toes?”

The Terrible Tabby might have been able to answer some of these questions, but he only crept back under the currant bush and fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER III

THE BIRD'S PARTY

Said Old Mother Bun so hale and hearty,
"Let us give the Sparrows now a party."
She took some crumbs from the pantry
shelf
And scattered them about herself.

The Song-Sparrow was the first to come to the party and he sang a merry song,

"Spring has come, if you will look
You'll find my nest near a meadow brook;
And when at last my nest is found,
You'll find it built on the ground."

He flew to the currant bushes waving his tail up and down, for Old Mother Bun startled him by saying,

"I hoped that you would think it best
In my currant bush to build your nest."

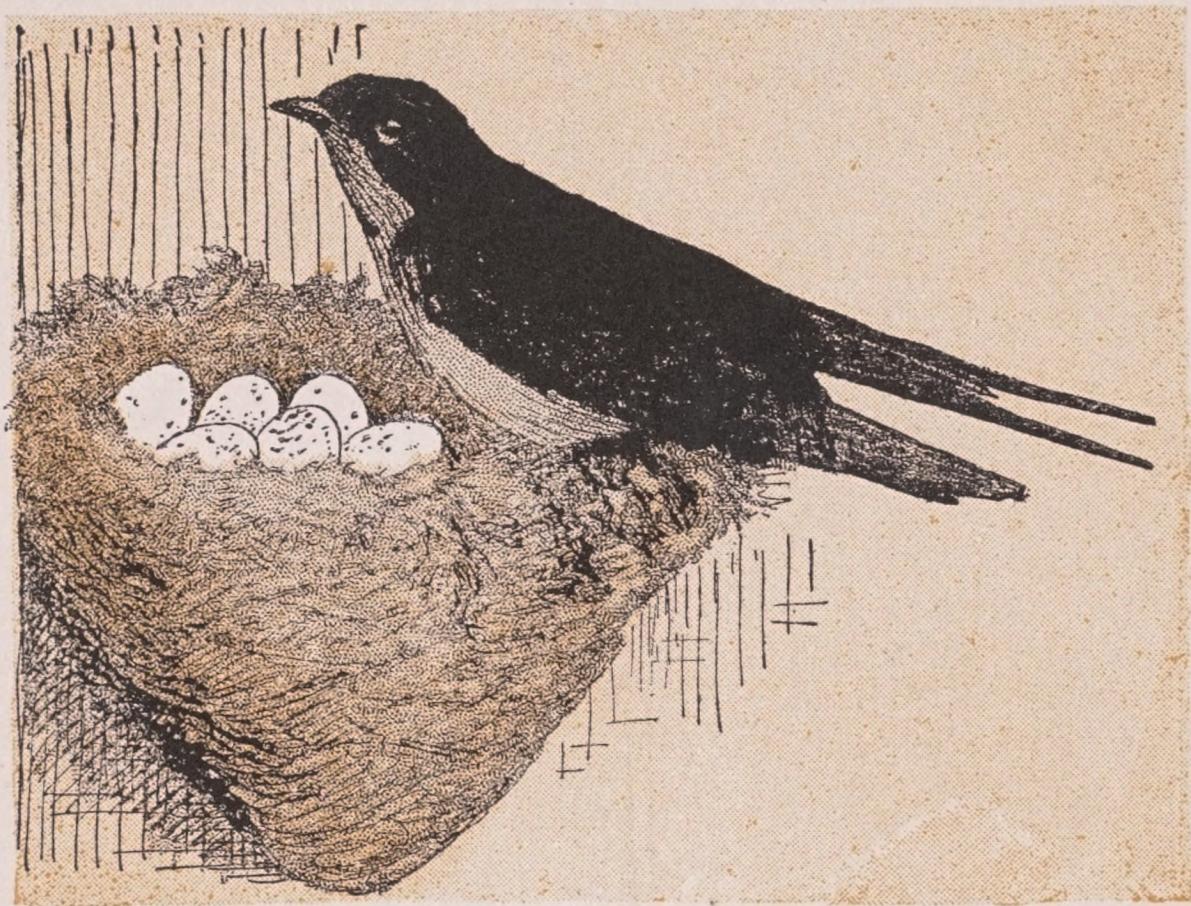


The Song-Sparrow admitted that he did sometimes build his nest in bushes, and he said he raised three broods every year.

He continued,

“Do you admire my spotted breast?
I must go, it is time to build my nest.”

He was a cunning Bird with one large spot in the centre of his breast.



While he was talking, his cousin, the Swamp-Sparrow appeared and began to enjoy the crumbs, saying over and over,

“I migrate and like to roam,
But the lowland is my home.”

Before he could say another word, a little Field-Sparrow came singing,

“I’ll sing and sing; this is the reason,
August ends my singing season.”

Old Father Bun came out and re-

marked that the Field-Sparrow was different from all the other Sparrows. His white breast, they saw, had no streaks upon it, and he had white rings about his eyes, and a brownish bill.

A voice now called joyfully,
"I'll tell you this, if you go hunting,
You may discover the Bay-Winged
Bunting."

It was the Vesper-Sparrow, and he said he was also called a third name, the "Grass-Finch." He added,

"Far and wide I like to roam,
But the great field is my home;
To recognize me you'll not fail,
If you see white feathers on my tail."

He perched on the fence and sang half an hour. He sang a low note and two high notes to introduce his song.

A whole colony of English Sparrows arrived.

They chattered noisily,
"We manage always to have fun;
We came to this country in '51."

They were introduced into this country in 1851 and they were brave little fellows, never complaining of rain or snow.

The Chipping-Sparrow next arrived and said,

“From the cotton fields in the south I come;
I will soon be glad to wing back home.”

He said the “homing instinct” is strong in nearly all birds. Suddenly he gave a cry of warning and all the birds flew away, for the Terrible Tabby was creeping round the currant bush.

Old Father and Mother Bun went inside and closed their door, saying,

“The Terrible Tabby has such bright eyes,
We wish we could take him by surprise.”

Old Father Bun said,

“To Teddy Thinker I’ll send a bell,
And our misfortunes I will tell;
Terrible Tabby tomorrow morning
Shall wear a bell to give us warning.”

Teddy Thinker was the boy who lived next door, and at that very minute he came and caught the Terrible Tabby, and Father Bun talked to him freely about the bell, and he agreed to do this at the earliest possible moment.

All the Birds came back and the Chipping-Sparrow with them. He said, "See my chestnut cap and forehead black, For variety I do not lack; I'll change these to match my coat, you'll see, When the nesting season is over for me."

Five little Owls flew about in a locust tree and scared the other birds so much they all made a great noise, and there was a great flapping of wings for they feared the big Mother Owl might come to devour some of them.

When there is any danger, birds try to protect each other.

Tommy Thinker saw the birds' distress and assured them that the tiny Owls were just trying their wings and that the old birds were not around.

A flock of White-Throated Sparrows came next, calling "chink, chink, chink."

The White-Crowned Sparrow joined them and said,

"Do you like my looks? Do you like my gown?

Do you like my song? Do you like my crown?"

He said, "All our family have short, round wings, but we only fly short distances." He said by fall his pretty white crown would turn brown. He said he liked to change the color of the feathers on his head with the season.

Just then a loud, sweet song was heard and

The Fox-Sparrow cried, "Hush, oh hush, I resemble the Hermit-Thrush."

He was larger than the other Sparrows and had such a spotted breast that he was sometimes actually mistaken for the Hermit-Thrush.

Old Father Bun said,
"Mother Bun, tell me, what do you say?"

Will we have other visitors today?"

Old Mother Bun replied,

"Up and down the leafy hollow,
Who is so aerial as the Swallow?"

On came the Swallow winging his way toward them, singing,

"I am well fitted to live in the air
With my blade-like wings, I do declare;
My feet are small when they come in sight;
For all that, I'm noted for my flight;
We eat insects and benefit man,
And so do all the good we can;
I hope this company will not fail
To note my deeply-forked long tail."

The Barn-Swallow, for it was he, continued by saying that there were eighty species of Swallows, but he only mentioned a few of his family and spoke of some of their nests.

He said,

"We are sociable altogether;
My mud nest I line with feathers.
My nest when finished, on the whole,

Resembles a very tiny bowl.
But the Cliff-Swallow, I've heard say,
Really makes his nest of clay;
The Bank-Swallow's burrows, I suspect,
Earn him the name of architect."

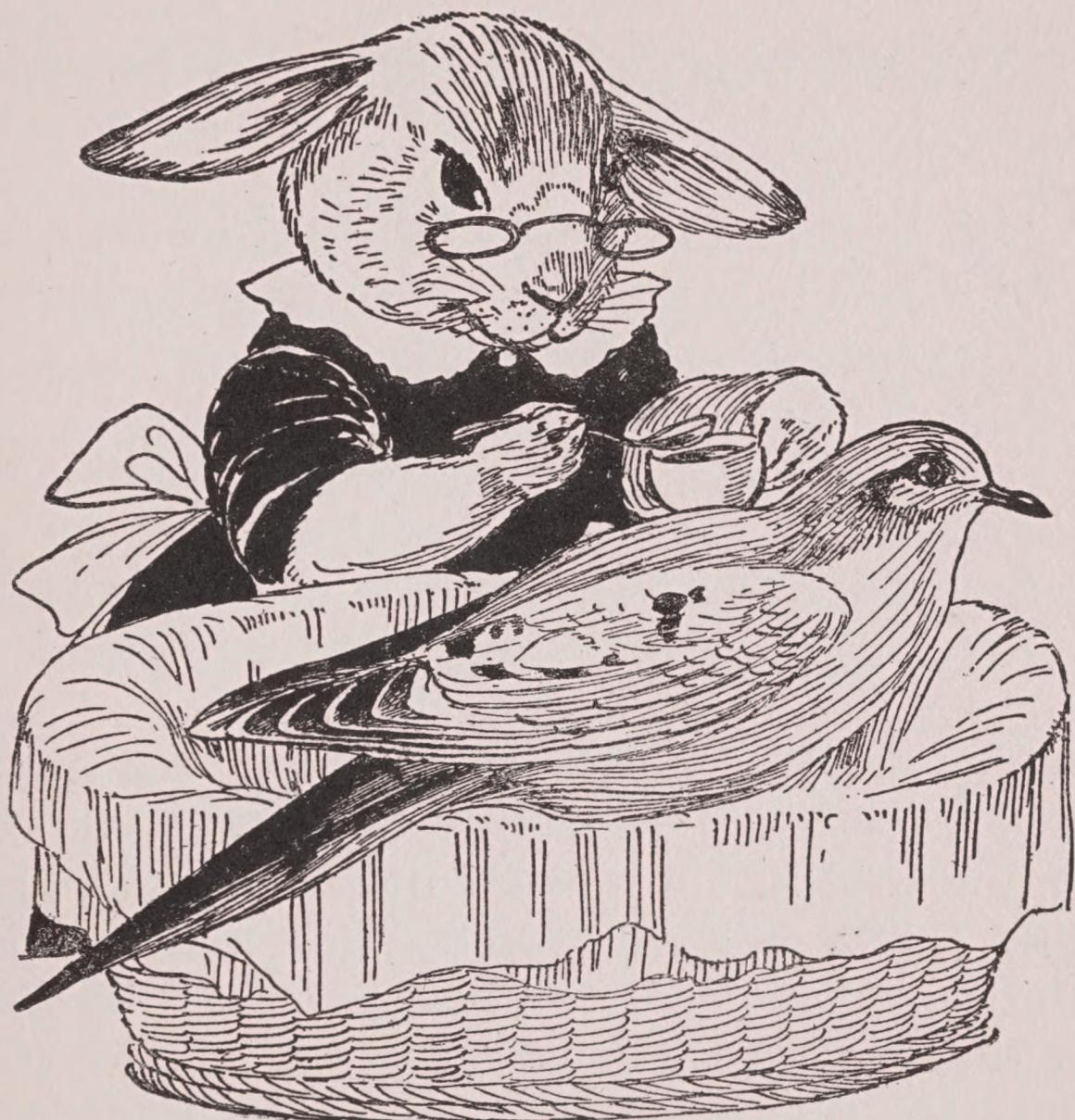
He did not tell about the nest the Tree-Swallow, or Purple Martin, made, but soon sailed away through the air, winging so swiftly he was very soon out of sight.

Just then the Terrible Tabby came in sight, but he had a bell on his collar that went "tinkle, tinkle, tinkle," so he gave fair warning, and the Birds flew away and the Surprise party was over.

That evening Old Father Bun said,
"It seems to me I hear a 'Coo';
Old Mother Bun, tell me, do you?"

Old Mother Bun went to the window and a most mournful cry was heard. There she found the Mourning-Dove on the window-sill. They opened the window and in he came, showing his wounded wing.

A thoughtless child had shot at this



beautiful creature while he was resting in a tree.

Old Mother Bun knew how to put something soothing on the poor wing and the Mourning-Dove became quite friendly and said he was often criticised for building his nest so carelessly. He said,

“Just a few twigs I cross, you see,
In the crotch in a pine tree.”

The Bunnies were interested, so he continued,

“The boy did not realize a thing
Of what it meant to hurt my wings;
They are my defense, you know,
And flying on my way I go;
For hours you hear me coo in spring,
And I can strike out with my wing;
As I start to fly there's something sings,
For I make music with my wings.”

Old Father Bun went and got a pan of water for the Mourning-Dove to have a drink, and they were interested to see him drink without raising his head. Tomorrow Old Father Bun planned to fill a shallow pan with water and set it outside for all the Birds to have a drink or bath.

The Mourning-Dove became quite talkative and said,

“I'm very glad old friends to meet;
Though insects I never eat,
I am a help in destroying weeds,
Because I eat so many seeds;
I look different at times—this is the reason—

I moult and get a new dress each season."

Old Mother Bun said,

"Mourning-Dove, please stay with me,
And build your nest in our old pine
tree."

She discovered that the Dove was really a very cheerful bird in spite of his mournful voice.

The Mourning-Dove said he was always nested in a tree in their neighborhood, but as the tree had been cut down, he would gladly accept their offer, and nest in their pine tree, but he said while his wing hurt so much he would stay inside and get well.

Old Father Bun lined a soft basket for him and said,

"There is a saying that never ends,
"To feed strange pigeons brings true
friends'."

Old Father Bun begged the Mourning-Dove to tell him something about the colors of Birds in general, as he was

interested in everything he could learn about a Bird.

The Mourning-Dove recited some lines he had learned long ago,

“Birds are protected, don’t you see!
Colored often much like a tree;
In Bird’s feathers are pigments found,
The light strikes them as they fly
around;
The coloring depends much on age,
And if you read farther down the page,
Perhaps you can even find the reason
Some Birds wear down in the nesting
season;
We have to molt, that’s the reason
Some Birds change color with the season.
We may retain feathers on wing and
tail,
But shed body-feathers without fail;
To tell you this perhaps I should,
Our color depends somewhat on food;
The Purple Finch becomes yellow, you
see,
When he is put in captivity.
Our color depends on climate, too,
We’re darker in damp regions, ’tis true,
And palest where the country is dry,

I truly cannot tell you why;
Deceptive colors in some way
Help us to approach our prey;
Here is a secret I've told no other,
**WE HAVE COLORS TO RECOGNIZE
EACH OTHER.**"

"Who? who? who?" called a loud voice
and then all was still.

The Mourning-Dove said, "One reason
I mourn is because children all over the
world have not learned to know and love
me."

Late that evening, Old Father Bun
said, "I am going to write a letter to
Sling-Shot Sam and ask him to visit
us. I know he will grow so fond of the
Mourning-Dove that he will never want
to shoot a Bird again as long as he lives."

The Mourning-Dove replied,
"Hark, hark, hark! to a voice you love;
'Coo, coo, coo,' sings the Mourning-
Dove."

CHAPTER IV

SLING-SHOT SAM

Sling-Shot Sam had a vacation,
So he accepted the invitation;
He made a friend of the Mourning-Dove,
And other Birds he learned to love.

Old Mother Bun said next day,
"Sling-Shot Sam is coming, 'tis true;
If he brings a sling-shot what will we
do?"

Old Father Bun replied,
"I can take him to the Park
And let him shoot at a mark."

They did not need to worry, for Sling-Shot Sam came, but he left his sling-shot at home. He said,

"How do you do? Father and Mother Bun;
Please let me join you in your fun."

Old Father Bun was working away making a bath for the birds. He made a



shallow bowl of cement and Sam helped him fasten it to the stump of a tree.

Old Father Bun said,
“Who will visit the bird-bath first today?
Let each of us guess, now, in our own
way.”

He guessed that Father Robin would

be first, and Old Mother Bun guessed that the Nuthatch would be the first, and Sam guessed the Catbird would be the first to come.

As it happened, none of them were right.

Mother Blue Jay began to scold and the Shy Squirrel began to chatter, and as he was thirsty, down he came for a drink of water, frisking his beautiful tail.

So the Shy Squirrel was the first visitor.

Just then a voice called,
"How do you do? How do you do?
I am the Mourning-Dove, coo, coo."

Sam discovered the Mourning Dove for the first time and admired his beautiful plumage.

When Sam found out the reason the beautiful creature could not fly, he rubbed his coat sleeve across his face and said, "I never thought before that Birds have feelings like we have. I would give every cent saved in my penny bank if I could make that wing whole again!"

He asked Old Father Bun if he might build a house for the Dove by and by, and he worked busily at it all day.

That evening he made a Bird Poster and drew and colored a picture of the Mourning-Dove. Upon it he wrote,

“Since the voice of the Mourning-Dove
I’ve heard,
I’ll always try to protect a Bird.”

Next morning Old Mother Bun cried excitedly,

“Wake up, hurry, come and see
The Waxwing in our Rowan tree.”

They all peeped out and saw a whole flock of perching birds with top knots, and a bit of red on their gray wings.

The birds were whispering together and chirping merrily.

Sam ran out and counted thirty in the flock.

He watched one bird take a berry from the tree and pass it to the next, and he in turn passed it to another, and so on.



Old Father Bun said, as one little bird
stroked the feathers of the one next him,
“The ‘Polite Bird,’ the ‘Polite Bird’
Is the name by which you’re called, I’ve
heard.”

Sam said, “They sit so close to each

other they must be good friends. I do wonder how they got the name of Wax-wing."

Old Father Bun was a great reader and he knew many things, so he said,

"On his inner wing-feathers there are points of red that look like red sealing wax. He is sometimes called the 'Polite Bird' and sometimes called the 'Cedar Bird.' He is called 'Polite' because of his habits, and the 'Cedar Bird' because he is fond of the Cedar berries. He eats berries of the evergreen and juniper tree as well as berries of the Rowan Tree. He also likes insects and cutworms, and he has a great appetite."

Just then the whole flock pointed their bills straight up and flew away.

Old Mother Bun said,

"Will they nest in the same place each year?"

The homing instinct is strong, I hear."

Old Father Bun laughed loud and long. He said, "These Birds are like gypsies and they roam about from one place to

another, and they often do not return to their old homes like other Birds do."

Sam became so interested in the Cedar Waxwings he watched when a few of them came back, and he took a picture of them.

He said, "I am going to make a Bird Chart and photograph every Bird I see." He soon mounted a picture of the Cedar Waxwing and wrote under it,

"No homing instinct. Named from appearance of wax-like spot on wing. No song, only a twitter, feeds on berries, insects and cutworms."

Next day, the very first visitor to the Bird-bath was Father Robin. My! how he enjoyed his bath!

Father Robin sang,
"I have a nest now, with blue eggs three,
Right up in the cherry tree!"

Old Mother Bun responded,
"Ha, ha, ha, I have always heard
You are a very friendly Bird."

Sam climbed up in the tree and took a look at the eggs in the nest. He wanted



A Bird Came Into Sight Calling "Bob White,
Bob White"

awfully to take one for his collection, but decided he would rather not after all, for he had become, in this short time, a great Bird lover.

A heavy bird with small wings soon came into view, calling, "Bob-White, Bob-White."

He said,

"My strong wings help me search for food;

I would not fly far if I could."

He said, "How interesting secrets are, Short wings are not made to fly far."

He said, "Hurrah! I'm glad I'm here; I build two nests every year;

Fourteen eggs sometimes are found In my nest upon the ground;

Another Bobwhite may think best To leave an egg right in my nest.

I whistle and sing, whistle and sing, 'Bob-White, Bob-White, I greet the spring'."

Sam said, "I never dreamed before that Birds could be so interesting. No wonder Hiawatha called them his "chickens!"

Bobwhite said, "Who said chickens?

Our family resembles them; our little ones pick up their food, and all sleep close together in a circle with heads outside, so as not to be caught by the Terrible Tabby or any other enemy.”

He continued,

“I am the farmer’s friend, indeed!
I eat seeds of many weeds;
I eat insects and beetles, too,
So the potato I save for you;
‘Bob-White, Bob-White!’ I have to run
From the hunter with his gun;
‘Bob-White, Bob-White!’ do you like that
song?
I am a Bird ten inches long.”

Sam noticed the white on the Bird’s throat and the white line over his eyes. He said, “I will draw a picture of the Bob-white family asleep in a circle.”

Said Old Father Bun,

“Hear that drumming, drumming!
These are signs that spring is coming.”

The Downy Woodpecker, of which there are twenty-five species in the United States, came in sight.



He said, "I drum. Do you hear me call?
There are over three hundred wood-
peckers in all,
I am the commonest Woodpecker you
see;
Will you not make friends with me?"

How could any one help but make
friends with this little fellow? He was
so friendly. He rapped sharply on the

tree to call his mate, and Old Mother Bun said,

“I heard you rap on the roof this morning;

You are welcome here, I give fair warning.”

He said,

“In the hollow tree I sleep all night;
My eggs, I'll tell you, are all pure white.
I am the smallest Woodpecker, they say,
That ever lived in the U. S. A.”

He did not tell much more about himself, but remarked,

“In the woods we think it best
To retire to build our nest;
We love some hole in a hollow tree,
'Twill make a cozy nest you see.
I'll show you now, if you will hush,
How I use my bill like a comb and
brush.”

So saying, he took a drop of oil from a gland at the root of his tail and then used his bill to dress his feathers. He said, “The bill of a bird is a great weapon of defense, and it is useful to him also in nest building.

To tell you many things I should;
We use the bill to get our food.
With my wonderful bill, you see,
I take insects from the tree."

Sam said,

"I will watch you, if you don't mind,
Two toes in front, two toes behind;
Your barbed tongue is useful, as I see,
To extract insects from the tree;
I hear you call your mate, 'tis true,
With your cheerful rat-tat-tat-too;
By shape and color I will know
Little Downy wherever I go."

The Downy Woodpecker said,

"I will tell you, if you don't mind,
Why I've two toes in front, and two be-
hind;
They help me to cling upon the tree,
So they are useful, quite, to me."

The Downy Woodpecker took a peck at the suet on the tree trunk, then he dived into a hole in the tree. If he had stayed a minute longer he would have said,

"Here comes Hairy Woodpecker, my cousin,

And other relations, half a dozen."

The Hairy Woodpecker who arrived did look much like him in color, but Sam observed that his tail feathers were white without any black bars upon them.

The Hairy Woodpecker said,

"Though my bill is not any stronger,
In size I am most three inches longer."

The Red-Headed Woodpecker came for a peck at the suet, and Sam thought him the most beautiful Bird he had ever seen.

While he was admiring him, the Flicker came in view saying,

"I eat the ants from a stump or tree;
On the ground my graceful form you see.

Just watch my feathers when I fly;
I'll call my mate, too, by and by."

He went off, only pausing to give another sharp rap-a-tap on the roof of the Bunnies' house.

Old Mother Bun said,

“I know now that spring is near,
For Yellowammer is nesting here.”

Old Father Bun said,

“I always call him ‘High-Hole’, you see;
He is a very intimate friend to me.”

Sam went in with the Bunnies and fed
the Mourning-Dove, stroking his wings
very tenderly.

He said, “I will begin to write up my
own Bird Book tonight and in it I will
draw and color every kind of Woodpecker
I can find, and, Father Bun, let us build
Bird-Houses tomorrow.”

After Sam had gone to bed Old Father
Bun said,

“If their haunts and habits we under-
stand,

We will always love our feathered
band,” to which Old Mother Bun re-
sponded,

“If we love the Birds, it will save them
sorrow;

We all will build Bird-Houses tomor-
row.”

CHAPTER V.

NESTS AND HOUSES

We all are happy for the reason
Now comes the Birds' nesting season;
Many a Bird-House you will see
Upon a post or in a tree.

“Rap-a-tap, tap,” went old Father Bun’s hammer.

“Buzz, buzz, buzz,” went Sam’s saw.

They were busy making Bird-Houses, one for the Wren, and one for the Bluebird.

Sam was making the Wren-House two stories high, and Old Father Bun was making the house for the Bluebird one story high, with a porch in front.

Old Mother Bun was busy planting honeysuckle vines and trumpet flower seeds to attract the Humming Bird by and by.

Old Father Bun said,



“Some Birds like houses, but some think
it best

Every year to build a brand new nest.
One Bird in his hammock-nest swings,
The Baltimore Oriole sings and sings.”

They saw the hammock-nest of the
Oriole in the tree above them, and Old

Father Bun said that the Birds came back to their old nest there, year after year.

He continued, as he worked away on his Bird-House, "All the Birds in spring are seeking a safe place to build a nest where they will be protected from their enemies.

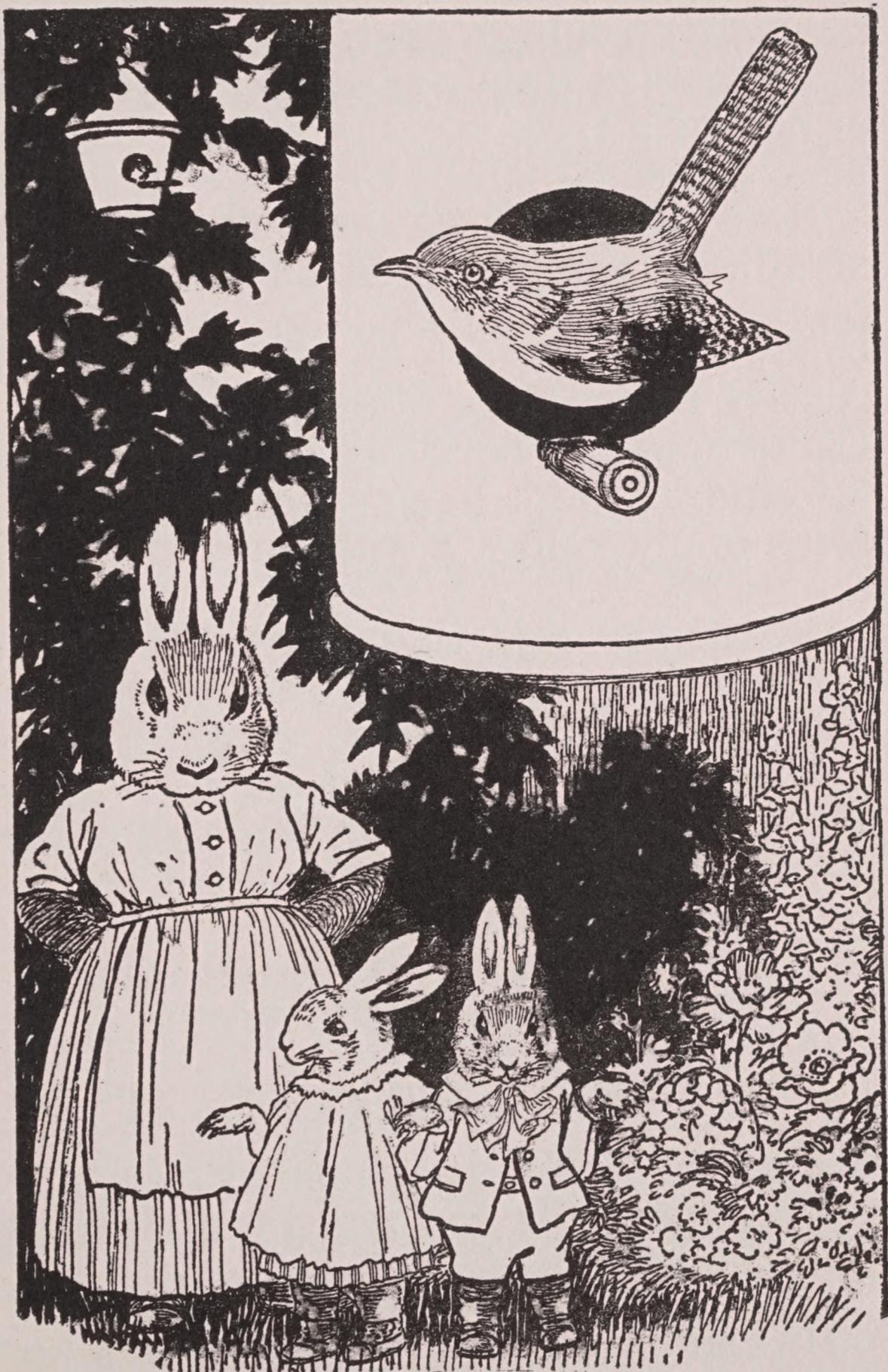
Some of them like to nest alone, and some of them like to nest in colonies, as the Swallows.

The kind of feet and bill a bird has, has much to do with the kind of nest he will build. The feeding habit has something to do with the place a Bird will choose to build his nest. The Downy Woodpecker and his family naturally like to nest where they can get insects from a tree.

Some Birds, like English Sparrows, nest most anywhere."

Sam enjoyed every word that Old Father Bun said.

By and by the Bird Houses were finished. The one for the Wren they nailed



securely on a high post, and the one for the Bluebird they nailed securely to the crotch of a tree.

Both Bird-Houses had openings so small that the larger Birds could not go in.

A very merry little Wren
Came hopping, bobbing, bouncing then;
He said, "I can't keep still a minute;
Here is my house, I will go in it."

No sooner said than done. The little Wren with the perky tail went bobbing in and out of the new House, singing, every minute full of joy and excitement, to think that he had found a home all ready. He remarked,

"I'll build a nest, but can't tell when,
I am such a merry little Wren."

Then he sang again merrily,
"This Bird-House was made by a scholar;
The opening is the size of a quarter-
dollar."

He was glad that the opening was just right for him.

Sam was pleased to think he had made the House just right, you may be sure.

The merry little Wren brought twigs and grasses to build a nest and his mate came to see the new house, too.

They sang, "We're the merriest birds in town;
We'll soon have some eggs of pinkish-brown.
To know us you will never fail,
When you see our up-turned tails."

The Wrens' tails were amusing to watch. They were carried very straight up, indeed.

Sam said he would never forget the Wrens' persistent whistle.

By this time the Mourning-Dove was ready to build a nest in the tree outside, and Old Mother Bun was as happy as could be about it.

Next day Old Father Bun found a little Bird flying round the Bird-House that he had made, and he said,
"A sweeter song I never heard;
It is our friend, the dear Bluebird."

The Bluebird sang to greet them a cute little song,

“The common Bluebird is my name;
Indeed, I’m very glad I came:
This little house up in a tree
Is just the very size for me;
To the Rockies if you go,
The Mountain Bluebird you will know.
In Arizona you will see
The Azure Bluebird, much like me;
Travel to the Pacific states,
There the Western Bluebird mates;
The San Pedro Bluebird is seen
In California ’mid the green.
A very timid fellow am I,
To fight me please do not try!
A bird-box or a hollow tree
Are very much the same to me.”

He chose the Bird-House, however!

Old Mother Bun said, “I will write a note to the Sparrows and tell them to leave you alone, you dear little bit of blue sky!”

Old Father Bun noticed that the Robin and Bluebird came at about the same time to visit them, and he said,

“All the woodlands now are ringing
With Bluebird and Robin singing;
Again we hear the Bluebird sing,
‘Welcome, welcome to the spring’.”

Sam said, “If I stay with you a while,
I wonder if I will see the Humming-Bird.
Will he soon be here?”

At that very minute a humming sound
was heard and a Ruby-throated Hum-
ming-Bird came to a balsam that Old
Mother Bun had set outside in a flower
pot. The Bird showed great pleasure in
finding a blooming flower like this in
May, and went from flower to flower.
He said,

“You have set me a fairy bower;
My bill is shaped, so I love this flower.”

The Humming-Bird extracted honey
from the flower. Sometimes he extracted
nectar and sometimes insects.

Sam asked him what else he liked to
eat and he replied, “I like gnats and
spiders and flies very well.”

He said that some Humming-Birds



who lived in tropical countries could sing, but, as for himself, he could only make a whirring sound with his wings. My! he was a dainty little fellow, with wings only one and a half inches long!

He continued, "I only live in America

and the Islands near you. I make a wee nest of down, of ferns and moss, about the size of a small watch. It will contain but two eggs."

He said, "Mother Humming-Bird will take care of the young birds," and added

"A rather peculiar fellow am I,
I stay away 'til my young can fly."

Old Mother Bun shook her head as she thought of the Mother Humming-Bird having all the care of the little birds.

Old Father Bun said,

"Here is a verse with a question in it,
Do you never keep still a minute?"

The Humming-Bird, just to show what he could do, perched for an instant on the rim of the flower-pot, but he did not look nearly as beautiful as he did in motion. He began soon to hum again as he passed from flower to flower, saying,

"When the whirr of my wings you've
heard,
You'll know you've met the smallest
Bird.

I very seldom stop to rest;
See the brilliant colors on my breast!"

Sam said, looking closely at him, "I see blue, green, gold and red."

The Humming-Bird said,

"There are nearly five hundred of us in all;
We escape notice often because we are small."

He spoke about the honey and insects he found in flowers, and Old Mother Bun thought that was so interesting she asked him to tell it in a tinkling rhyme, so he responded,

"Honey and insects in the flower
May keep me busy a quarter of an hour."

Then he flew away as suddenly as he had come.

That evening Sam said, "I have met Tree-Tappers like the Woodpeckers and Nuthatch, and several others, and I have seen birds that glean from the

ground, like the Robin and Bobwhite. Blue Jay, and Sparrow, who eat what they can get from the ground.

I have seen Sky-Fliers who eat insects on the wing, like the Swift and Swallow. What other Birds will I meet?"

Old Father Bun said, "The Weed-Watchers will tell you they eat seeds of weeds, and the Sowers will tell you they eat fruit and drop seeds on the ground. The Watchers-of-the-night will tell you they eat mice, and bats, and moles who would otherwise do us harm."

Sam said,

"Birds are so useful now to man,
I will protect them all I can."

A wierd voice in the night called,
"Who? Who? Who?"

CHAPTER VI.

A BIRD LETTER AND ALPHABET

A Bird Letter and Alphabet
Is something you'll not soon forget,
So come and join us in our fun,
And visit Old Father and Mother Bun.

One morning Sam said, as they lingered round the breakfast table, "Let us play a Bird Game."

Old Mother Bun said, "I am told
If we play games we'll not grow old."

Old Father Bun enjoyed games and he said,

"Sam, I'm very glad you came;
Tell us how to play the game."

They began now to play the game in real earnest.

It was called "Seeing The Birds."

Sam said, "I saw this morning a Robin."

Old Father Bun repeated what Sam had said and added the name of another bird, saying, "I saw this morning a Robin and a Bluebird." Old Mother Bun continued, "I saw this morning a Robin and a Bluebird and a Wren."

Sam said, "I saw this morning a Robin and a Bluebird and a Wren and a Flamingo."

So they kept on until one forgot to name some Bird already named in the list and so went out of the game.

Then they played a game called "Naming The Birds."

Old Father Bun began by saying, "I am thinking of a Bird whose name begins with 'S'."

The first one to say "Sparrow," or "Swallow," or any bird whose name begins with "S" continues, "I am thinking of a Bird whose name begins with "O," (or any letter).

The first to name a Bird whose name begins with "O" continues, and the game may be kept up any length of time.

While they were playing this game, the Postman brought a letter for Old Father Bun.

It was from one of their feathered friends.

It read,

“Cat-Tail Swamp.

My Dear Father Bun:—

Isn’t it fine to be alive in springtime? for all the world seems happy. I want to introduce myself, for I have heard you are kind to Bird Visitors. I am the Red-Winged Blackbird.

I wear a black dress and what resembles a badge, worn on the shoulder of a naval officer, of red and white.

I can live out-doors all winter, if I have proper food and shelter. Unlike many Birds, I enjoy singing through the winter. If I could find plenty of food, I would not travel South at all.

The Bobolink, Starling, Yellow-Headed Blackbird and Meadow-Lark are closely related to me.

If you will tell me that the Terrible



Tabby is shut up, and send an invitation,
I will try to come and visit you.

Your sincere friend,
The Red-Winged Blackbird.

P. S.

Do you really know my song?
I am a Bird nine inches long."

Old Mother Bun said,
"Once, long ago, his song I heard;
Let's read again, now, every word."

Old Father Bun had been reading a Natural History about Birds and said, "Some one says he sings,
'O-ka-le, O-ka-le,
Come to me, come to me'."

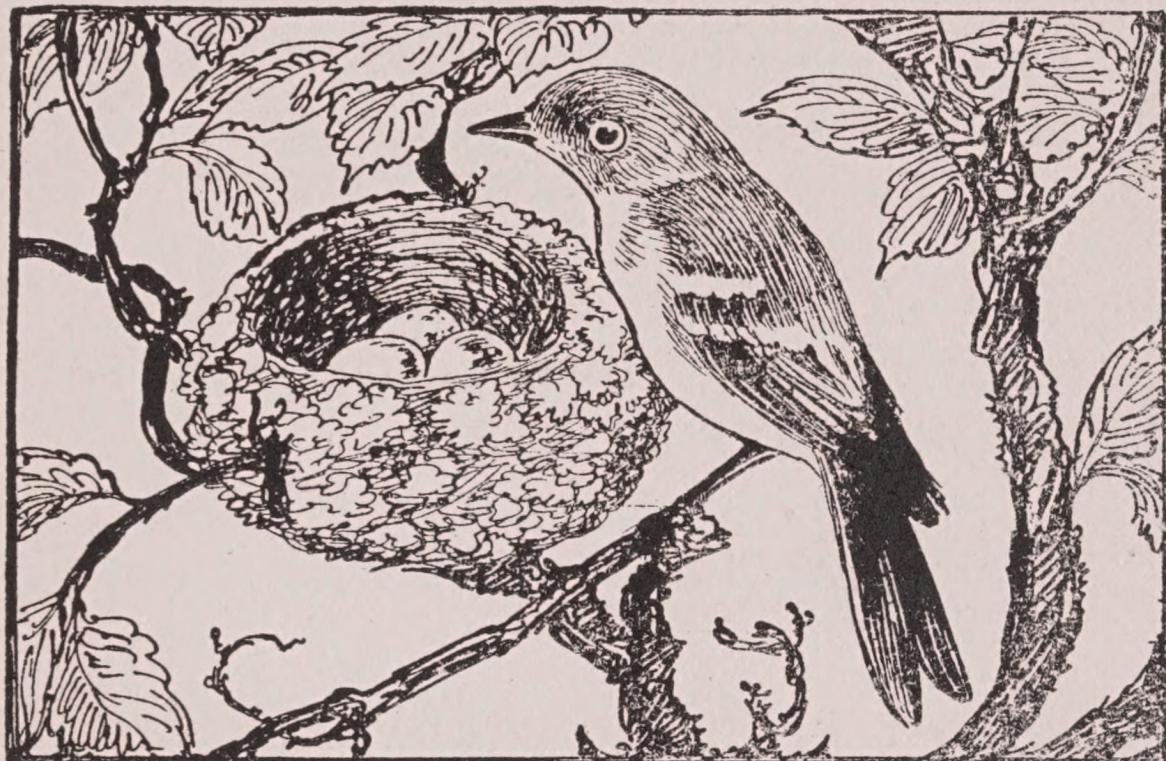
Sam sat down and wrote an answer to the Red-Winged Blackbird.

At this very minute a voice called,
"Is there any one here kind and good?
I have lost my way in the woods."

Old Father Bun went out and saw a wee little girl with a great hat covered with feathers. She said her name was Polly Pewee, and she was afraid, like Red Riding Hood, she might meet a wolf.

Polly Pewee said she was named for a Bird, 'Pewee.'

Just then a voice called, "Pewee, Pewee, Pewee." Polly cried,



xx

“The Wood-Pewee, the Wood-Pewee,
Come and see, in the apple tree.”

They all found a wee Bird calling “Pewee, Pewee.” He said,

“I’ve no music box, I cannot sing,
But I catch insects on the wing.”

“He is one of our fly-catchers,” said Sam.

The Pewee sang,
“Oh, let me see, oh, let me see,
My nest I’ll build on the south of the tree.

The Wood-Pewee is shy to all;
I am named from my call.
I'll build my nest some time in June,
The early spring is for me too soon;
To make friends if we think best,
Some day I may show my nest;
Grasses, roots, and moss you will dis-
cover;
With lichens the outside I cover over;
To protect from Hawks I may weave a
top,
I'll tell the other secrets, unless I stop."

Polly Pewee said, "I love that little Bird. It is the only Bird I know by name."

Sam told her how he had grown to know and love the Birds. Suddenly there were heard a merry whistle and song.

They all went out to look in the maple tree but the new songster was very hard to discover.

Over and over that merry whistle burst from his throat. At last Sam cried, "Why, he is a bright red bird! It is strange he could hide so well we did not see him before. There is an Olive-brown Bird with him!"



Old Father Bun said, "The Red Bird,
the Cardinal!"

Old Mother Bun said, "The Olive-
brown Bird is his mate."

The Cardinal said,

"In vines on your porch I built a nest,
Very high up, for I thought it best,
But my eggs were stolen, don't you see
How very much that discouraged me?"

Sam hung his head, and Polly Pewee said, "What a shame!"

"Who stole the eggs?" asked Old Father Bun,

"I cannot imagine it of any one."

A voice cried out, "Who? Who? Who?"

Old Mother Bun said,

"It is very sad but so it goes;

I believe the Screech Owl knows."

Aside from that remark about the eggs, the Cardinal was gay and happy and said he had decided to build a nest this year in a thicket.

"Why not try the bushes back of our house?" asked Old Father Bun. The Cardinal nearly agreed to do it. He said

"If I come to nest, I'll stay right here;
I sing fully six months of the year."

He said, "I am often hunted and trapped, for people like my gay feathers and jaunty top-knot, and I am often caged. I do not like the thought of living in a cage." So singing, away he flew.

Old Father Bun said,
"I love that whistle, I love that call,
I love the Cardinal best of all."

Old Mother Bun said,
"A bird's plumage I'd never borrow;
The Red-Winged Blackbird may come
tomorrow."

Sam said,
"I'll throw away my sling-shot for I dis-
cover
I am becoming a real Bird Lover."

Silently Polly Pewee tore the feathers
off her hat and then said,
"I love the Cardinal's sweet refrain;
His feathers I'll never wear again."

The Cardinal had sung his message
so it reached the hearts of the children.

Sam and Polly made out a Bird Alphabet and here it is.

Can you make pictures of all the Birds mentioned and color them?

A BIRD ALPHABET

A-The great Auk, thirty inches long,
In the Arctic Regions must belong.

B-The Bluebirds all delight to sing,
Every year to greet the spring.

C-The Catbird leaps from bush to bough;
We very often hear him "me-ow."

D-Doves are flying high above;
We admire the Mourning Dove.

E-An Eagle is a stately Bird,
Very strong, so we have heard.

F-The Flycatchers that we see
Nest in the crotch of any tree.

G-The Grosbeak's nest is lightly made,
And he prefers oak trees for shade.

H-Humming-Bird is our smallest Bird;
His whirring wings are often heard.

I-An Ibis in captivity
Loses bright colors, as you see.

J-The Junco is a pleasant Bird;
All winter his gay call is heard.

K-The Kinglet's music box is small,
But at times we hear his call.

L-The Lark said, "While on the wing
Is the time I chose to sing."

M-The Meadow-Lark says, "Whoever
passes,
I will hide amid the grasses."

N-The little Nuthatch in the tree
Cracks a nut where all can see.

O-Oriole, while he sings and sings,
In a hammock-nest now swings.

P-The Wood-Pewee is very shy;
He is watchful of the passers-by.

Q-The Quail greets us and is polite,
As he calls, "Bob-White, Bob-White."

R-The Robin travels for the reason
He must find food in every season.

S-The Sparrows, as we all can see,
Belong to a large family.

T-In the woodland hush! oh hush!
Hear the song of the Brown Thrush!

U-The Urinator or the Loon
On the lake will call out soon.

V-The Vireo, so we've heard say,
Comes back home the first of May.

W-The Cedar Waxwing now is here,
But may not visit us next year.

X-Xantho-ceph-a-lus, so we've heard,
Is Latin for "Yellow-Headed Black-
Bird."

Y-Yellow Hammer comes tap-tapping,
For his mate we know he is rapping.

Z-Zamelodia is the "Grosbeak's" name,
And we are glad to know he came.

We hope you will not forget
To make your own Bird Alphabet!

CHAPTER VII.

ORDER OF BIRDS

If Oriole's song you ever heard,
You would want to protect that Bird;
A wonderful song Oriole sings,
And in a hammock-nest he swings.

“Hurry, hurry, hurry,” cried Old Mother Bun one morning. “See the Bird with bright colors! Hear his merry song!”

Old Father Bun said,
“Where is the Bird? why bless my soul!
It is the Baltimore Oriole.”

Sam and Polly hurried to see the Oriole.

He was in the maple tree by his old hammock-nest.

He sang, “I’m back again once more,
I lived in this same nest before;
My orange and black you will adore,
I was named for Lord Baltimore.”



Sure enough, orange and black were the colors of the livery of Lord Baltimore.

The Oriole said he sometimes went by other names, as "Firebird," "Hangnest," and "Golden Robin," but he liked the name "Oriole" best.

His strong nest made of plant fibres was ready for him. He sang,
"I am more common on the whole
Than the Orchard Oriole;

He likes the orchard, so they say,
Better than the tree's high way."

With a whistle and whir of wings he
was gone.

Polly said, "If I lived in the woods so
I could recognize a Bird by his song, I
would be a friend of the Bird forever."

Sam said,

"The Birds protect the farms for man;
We should protect them all we can."

He said if we were without Birds our
crops would be destroyed by insects. He
continued,

"I will build a Bird-House every year,
And always keep the song-bird near."

Polly Pewee said, "I will work a motto
and hang it in our dining-room at home,
so I will remember to give the Birds
crumbs from the table every day."

She thought some time before she
made up the motto.

This was the motto,
"Protect me as I protect you;
Always spare us a crumb or two."

Old Father Bun said wisely,
"Bird's egg collections do not make;
I think you'll find it a mistake."

He continued that he thought a bag of marbles would be much more fun to play with than the eggs of any Bird.

Old Mother Bun said, "There are seventeen Orders of Birds in North America. Can't you tell about a few of them in rhyme?"

Old Father Bun said,
"If you care to listen to what I say,
There are Perching Birds, and Birds of
Prey;
The Game Birds you've heard of before,
And many Birds who live on Shore;
The Web-Footed Swimmers, too,
Some day I'll introduce to you;
The Long-Winged Swimmers, Gull and
Tern,
These names some day you will learn.
Name a Tube-Nosed Swimmer; if at a
loss,
Think of the beautiful Albatross;
The Diving Birds we may meet soon,
Auk, Grebe, Murre, and Loon;
We all know the faithful Drummers,



And Goatsuckers, Swifts, and Hummers;
I am almost through with the list, not
quite,
There is the Scratching Bird, Bob-
white."

They all stopped then and played a
Bird Game. One described a Bird, and
the one who guessed it correctly de-
scribed another, and so on.

They were puzzled a long time about one Bird that Old Father Bun described. He said, "It has a rather heavy white beak, a rosy spot on its white breast, a black head and tail, and its wings are black and white. It has a beautiful song, eats insects and potato bugs, seeds, and fruits. He is a happy Bird and has a mate who wears a dull-colored dress but wings lined with gold. These Birds like to live together in colonies."

No one could guess the name of that Bird, and just then a wonderful song was heard, a song more musical than the Robin's, and the Rose-Breasted Grosbeak appeared.

"What a beautiful Bird!" cried Polly.

"What a wonderful singer!" cried Sam.

The Grosbeak became quite friendly as the days passed, and said,

"I am happy when the days are bright,
I'll talk to you if you're polite;
I will tell a story without fail,
What do you know of a wee Bird's tail?"

Both children answered that they

knew nothing at all about a Bird's tail,
so the Grosbeak continued,

"Some Birds travel by day or night,
The tail has something to do with flight,
The wings will be helpful you'll agree;
Short-tailed Birds fly straight; you'll see
Long-tailed Birds fly as they please,
And make many turns with ease;
Some tree-creeping Birds that upward
climb

Use the tail to brace them any time;
A Bird's disposition if you please,
Is sometimes shown in tails like these,
A sad Flycatcher's tail droops down, and
then

See the up-turned tail of the merry
Wren!

Short-winged Land Birds have strong
feet all,

But aerial creatures have feet quite
small;

The tail and feet, let me repeat,
The Bird's requirements must meet."

This was such a long story that the Brown Creeper climbing on the tree was afraid no one would listen to him, but he said,



“I’m a Brown Creeper, I’ve come to town;
I never climb with my head down.
To hang on the tree I do not fail,
For I brace myself with my tail.”

“He is different in that respect from
the Nuthatch,” said Sam.

The Brown Creeper said,
“I am busy from daylight to dark,
Searching for insects in the dark.

I'm very busy, and think it best
To work and seldom take a rest.”
He said, “I don't care whether
You call it ‘Brown Creeper’ or ‘Nuthatch weather.’”

Polly laughed and said, “Do we have
‘Robin Weather’ and ‘Nuthatch Weather’
and ‘Brown-Creeper Weather’?”

The Brown Creeper replied,
“I like to creep on cloudy days,
I suppose it is one of my odd ways;
I'm protected by my coloring you see,
I look so like the bark on the tree;
On my brown back observe today
I have about a dozen stripes of gray;
I am really a winter Bird, you see,
And belong to the Tree-Creeper Family.”

He was too busy to talk any more.

Old Father Bun said,
“There are many wild Birds I know;
On a picnic, come, let us go.”

Old Mother Bun suggested,
“Perhaps a camera we can borrow;

Let's go on a picnic, then, tomorrow."

Sam said, "Hurrah! hurrah! I have field glasses with me."

Polly said, "Hurrah! hurrah! I have a camera."

So it was decided that the happy company should go on a picnic next day.

Said a wise old Bird in a tree,
"Such busy people I never knew!
Who'll go on a picnic? Who? Who?"

CHAPTER VIII.

A WOODLAND PICNIC

Said Old Mother Bun, "It's time for fun,
And when our morning's work is done,
On a picnic we will go,
When the merry spring winds blow."

"A picnic!" said Sam.

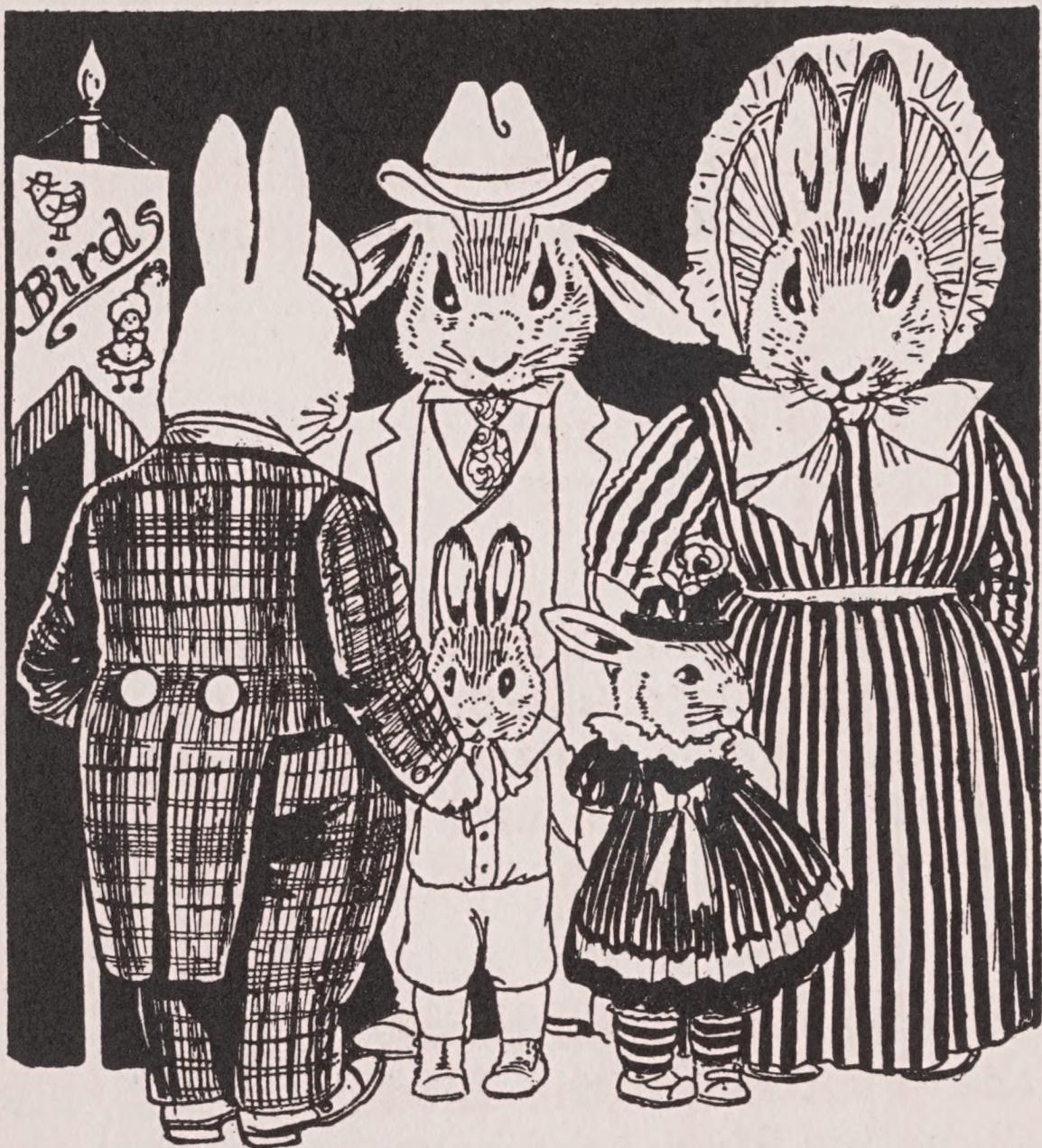
"A picnic!" echoed Polly.

They ran to and fro to help Old Father and Mother Bun pack the picnic baskets. Of course, there were sandwiches, and lemons and sugar, and everything needed to make a lunch for a picnic party.

As they started out merrily they heard the "tinkle, tinkle, tinkle" of a bell, and they had to go back and wait for the Terrible Tabby to disappear.

They started again and Old Father Bun said,

"There is something I forgot,
But we will find it like as not."



Old Father Bun never went anywhere without his pipe, so they stopped and looked upstairs and down stairs, and still his pipe was nowhere to be found.

Suddenly Sam began to laugh, and Polly began to laugh and Old Mother Bun laughed, for there was the stem of

his pipe peeping out from Old Father Bun's pocket!

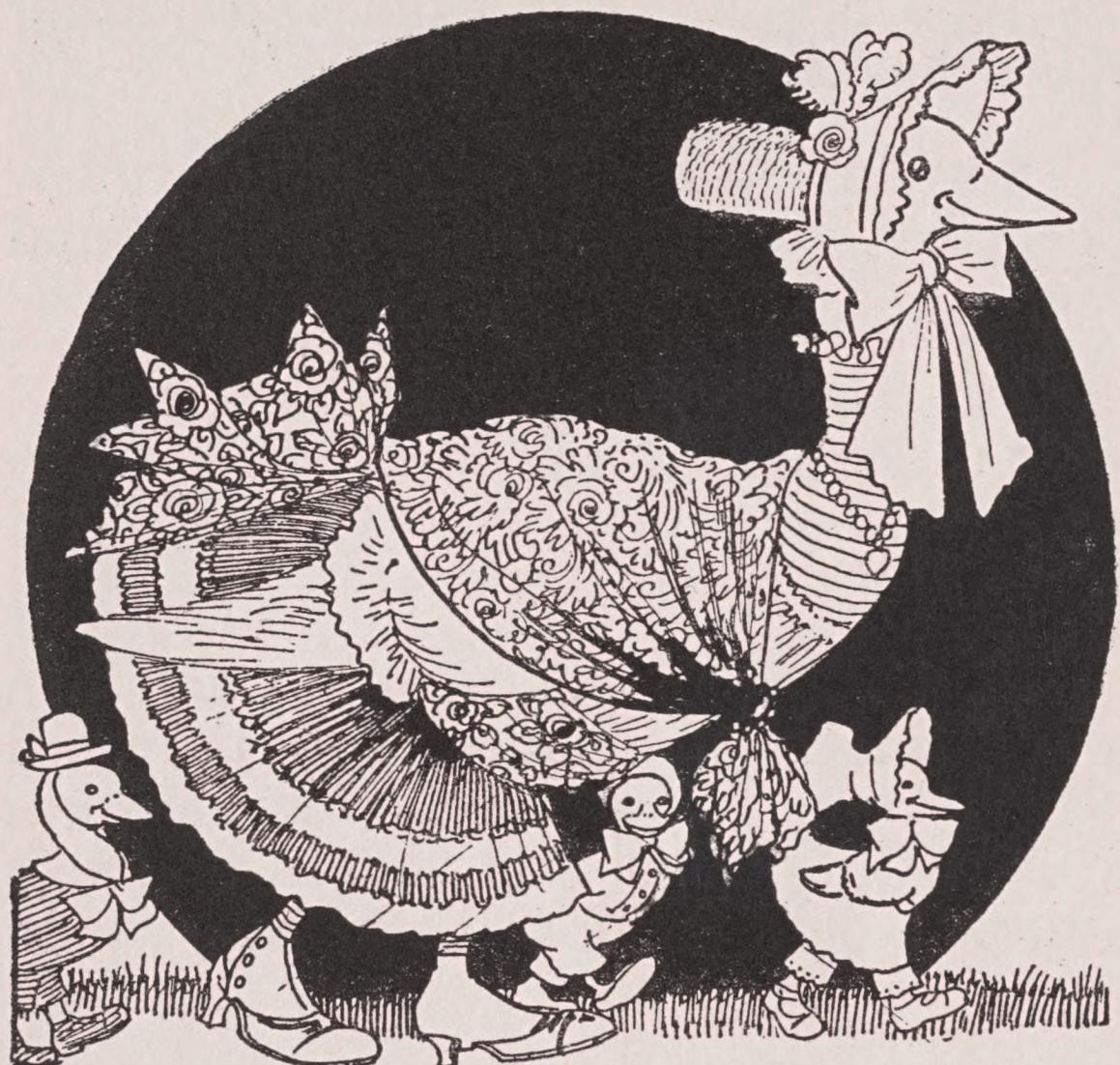
They started again, when a little fellow peeped round the current bushes and said,

“I’m an Up-to-Date Bunny,
My ways are funny,
A Club I will form
For Bird reform.”

All the Bunnies gathered 'round him and he produced a banner with the word “BIRD” upon it. He said they would form a Bird-Club then and there, and ask others to join them, and the rules would be,

1. Be kind to all Birds.
2. Protect all the Birds.
3. Give Birds food, water and lodging.
4. Learn the names of twenty birds.

Sam, who was a regular boy, said, “We must soon have meetings, and let no one come who does not know the password we use to enter. For a long time they could not decide on a password, then Polly and Sam made up this jingle which



they said all the Bird-Club members could learn.

“Bobolink, Crow and Vireo,
Ha, ha, ha, ho, ho, ho,
“Bobolink, Crow and Vireo
No outsider could ever know!”

As the Up-to-Date Bunny had nothing else to do after he had formed the Bird-Club and Old Father Bun had been elect-

ed President, he was persuaded to join the picnic party.

It was such a fine spring day that other people had thought of a picnic, too, and they met the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe and her children and Mother Goose herself with many children and favorite Birds.

They formed a happy party, you may be sure, and all the members of the Bird-Club showed the buttons they were wearing. Each button had a picture of a Bird upon it.

Mother Goose had a wonderful Crow. She said,

“There was an old Crow
Sat upon a clod;
There’s an end of my song,
That’s very odd.”

At this very minute the Crow appeared and sang a song about a tailor who once shot at him and missed his mark and shot a poor pig instead. Then he said,

“There were three crows sat on a stone,

Two flew away and then there was one;
The other crow finding himself alone,
He flew away and then there were
none."

The Crow continued, "We like to fly
in flocks." Then he began to talk in
jingle again.

"We will build a nest of grape-vine bark
 by and by,
And we will build it up about thirty feet
 high;
We use sticks and mud so good people
 say
The wind cannot blow our rude nest
 away;
Our eggs will be bluish-green and brown,
Caw, caw, caw, we have come to town."
He said, "I cry 'caw' but never sing;
How I like to be with you in the spring!
The Blue Jay and Magpie, as you see,
Also belong to my own family."
He continued, "What if I have no song?
I am a big bird eighteen inches long,
And this one thing let me repeat,

I SAVE MORE GRAIN THAN I EVER
EAT."

He did admit that he liked to pull up corn and take milk from the bottom of a young corn plant, but that he did the farmer a good turn when he ate cut-worms, grasshoppers, mice and caterpillars. He did admit that he sometimes ate eggs and even young birds. He was a bold fellow but honest.

As the company passed by a marsh they heard a Bobolink call,

"I am dressed in black, white, brown and gray,

I am very good-looking, so people say;
My mate in yellowish-brown is found,
And we build our nest upon the ground.
When my young are grown, why, do you
guess,

I begin to change my dress?

I dress then like my mate, you know,
And off and away to the south we go.
This thing we really think a shame,
We are often hunted yet for game.
South of the Amazon we go,
Many thousand miles, you know."

The Mother Goose children and the Bunnies and Sam and Polly helped

spread the cloth and cook for the picnic. They had a wonderful lunch, for Jack Horner brought pie, and the Queen of Hearts brought tarts and the Bunnies shared their good things to eat.

They told stories, and Mother Goose called her Birds around her and let them recite verses and eat up the crumbs.

Mother Goose said,

“I had two Pigeons bright and gay,
They flew from me the other day;
What was the reason they did go?
I cannot tell, for I do not know!”

Just then one of her Doves came and began chattering to a Wren overhead.

The Dove says, “Coo, coo, what shall I do?

I can scarcely maintain two.”

“Pooh! Pooh!” says the Wren, “I have got ten,
And keep them all like gentlemen.”

The Old Woman Who Lived in the Shoe sighed as she thought of her family, remarking,



“There were two Blackbirds sitting on a hill,
The one named Jack, the other named Jill;
Fly away, Jack, fly away, Jill,
Come again, Jack, come again, Jill.”

She added,

“The Cuckoo’s a fine bird,
He sings as he flies,
He brings us good tidings,
He tells us no lies.”

“Who? who? who?” cried a voice overhead.

Polly said,

“Jenny Owlet, Jenny Owlet, said a merry
little bird,
They say you’re wondrous wise,
But I don’t think you see, though you’re
looking at me
With your large, round, shining eyes.”

Old Mother Bun said, “The Owl does not see very well in the day time.”

The Up-to-Date Bunny had been running about all the time and discovered some ducks in a pond, and came back shouting,

“Old Mother Duck has hatched a brood
Of ducklings, small and callow;
Their little wings are short, their down
Is mottled gray and yellow.”

They all went to see the ducklings, then started home at last.

“Ha, ha, ha,” said Old Mother Bun,
“I think a picnic is lots of fun.”

Father Bun remarked sleepily, after they got home,

“I must count twenty birds,”
But his voice was scarcely heard.
Father Bun, I do declare,
Fell asleep in his rocking chair.

Sam and Polly were still wide awake.

They made a booklet of brown paper, and wrote on the outside in fancy letter, “MOTHER GOOSE AND HER BIRDS.”

They said next day they would copy every verse they could find in which Mother Goose mentioned a Bird, and they would draw and color the birds, too.

Said Polly and Sam,

“We’ll use this booklet for a greeting,
Some day we’ll have a Bird-Club Meet-
ing.

Good night, good night, Old Mother
Bun,
There’ll be something to interest every
one.”

Then Polly and Sam turned out the
light,
And said to all "Good night, good
night."

CHAPTER IX.

A BIRD CLUB MEETING

Said Father Bun, "I send this greeting,
We will hold a Bird-Club Meeting."

Said Father Bunny, brave and true,
"These Birds I'll introduce to you."

Old Mother Bun said,

"I'll give invitation hearty
To a special Bird-Club Party."

Their own children, Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny, had come back home, and joined the Bird-Club at once.

Old Father Bun said that Polly and Sam should help arrange a program, so they all set to work.

The Club was called "THE BIRD-CLUB OF CAT-TAIL SWAMP."

After much study the program read,

1. Introduction. What it means to form a Bird-Club.
2. Song. "Protect The Birds."
3. Attracting The Birds.
4. Bird Homes.
5. A Bird Alphabet.
6. A Bird Game.

Old Father Bun knew and loved all the Birds so he had no trouble writing the invitations, and Old Mother Bun knew how to attract them by putting out crumbs and suet.

Polly and Sam knew something about making houses for them, and they had already played several Bird Games and learned a Bird Alphabet, so they did not have much to prepare but the Bird Song for their program.

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny helped them compose words to the tune of "Marching Through Georgia."

1.

"Come and join our Club today,
We'll greet you with a song,
You'll hear many a roundelay

From all our feathered throng;
We will pause amid our play
To help good work along,
Welcome the Birds and befriend them.

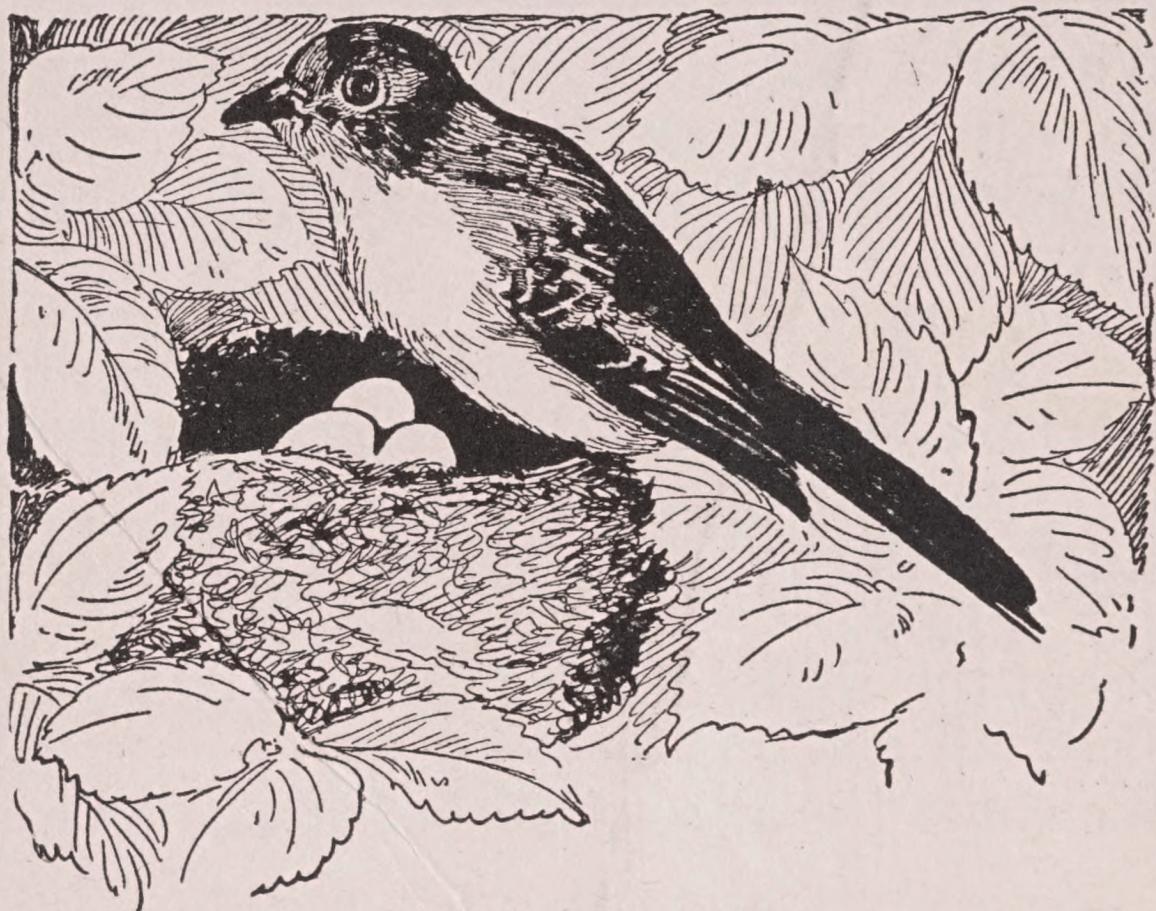
Chorus:

Hurrah, hurrah, we love the Birds that
sing,
Hurrah, hurrah, we greet them every
spring,
From the south they're coming back,
They all are on the wing,
Welcome the Birds and befriend them.

2.

This our motto then shall be,
Make every Bird your friend,
Form a happy company,
To them a message send,
For each Bird we plant a tree,
And homes to them we lend,
Welcome the Birds and befriend them."

Many children came to the Bird-Club
Meeting and who do you suppose was the
first to accept the invitation? A Bird
who sang,



“I am as happy as happy can be,
Here’s a home for me, little Phoebe.”

He began to build a nest among the
vines on the porch and said,

“I will build a nest large and wide,
For six little birds will live inside,
If we do not suffer any loss;
I build my nest of mud and moss.
‘Pheobe, Pheobe,’ hear me sing,
I arrive early in the spring;
I’m a Flycatcher and Perching Bird,
You will not forget my cry, once heard;



I wag my tail and sing, "Phoebe,"
I am a sociable fellow, you see."

Healthy Bunny said, as he re-filled the bird-basin with pure water for the newcomer,

"Even a feathered son or daughter
Ought to prefer to drink pure water."

Pretty Bunny, who never forgot to be polite, said,

"Phoebe, you're a new-comer, too,
Little Bird, how do you do?"

Just then all the members of the Bird Club listened.

Said Father Bun, "Hark, oh hark!
Hear the song of the Meadow-Lark!"

A Meadow-Lark was hiding in the deep grass back of the house. He sang,

"I hope my nest will not be found,
I have to feed upon the ground."

He sang, "I travel far and wide,
But from you all I like to hide;
When I am flying you'll not fail
To see white feathers on my tail;
Though I like your company,
I sing way high up in the tree;
I hope you will enjoy my song,
I am about ten inches long.

I protect the farmer from insects and
weeds,
And hope you will love me well, indeed."

He flew up into the tip-top of a tree
and sang a most musical song.

Old Father Bun received many letters
from Land Birds and Water Birds, and
some of them sent postals with their
pictures upon them.

The Flamingo sent an interesting



card with his picture upon it, showing his gay costume. He wrote,

“Though I do not indulge in song,
I have a foot twelve inches long,
My legs and neck are long, you’ve heard,
I am a web-footed Water Bird;
On Aquatic plants I walk,
I wish I could drop in and talk,
I’m a red bird who likes to wade,
But in captivity I fade;
I stand about forty inches high,
And so look down on passers by;
In Florida I like to roam,
And in Cuba make my home;

If you meet me do not be afraid,
I'm related to Birds who swim and
wade."

All the Club members crowded round
to see the picture of the Flamingo.

Healthy Bunny said, "What other
Birds sent postals?"

Pretty Bunny said, "We have many
more cards to read and they all are so
interesting."

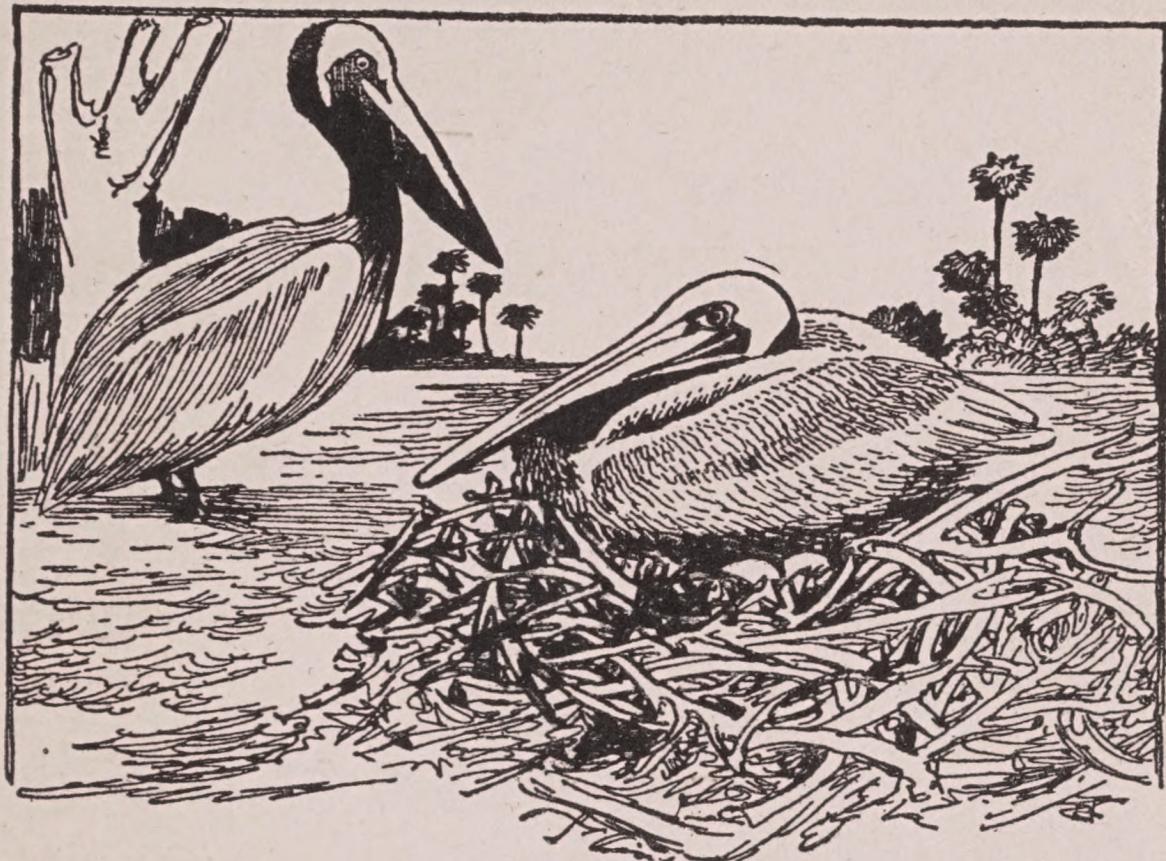
Old Father Bun looked proudly at his
children

Said Old Father Bun to his son and
daughter,
"Some birds like land, some birds like
water."

They next received a postal from Pelican
Island, Florida. It said,

"Dear Friends:—

We are all in favor of a Bird-Club and
wish you could visit us. Several thousand
of us nest here every year. We build our



nests on the ground and lay eggs from February on.

We wish you could see our young. They are interesting-looking Birds.

We enjoy fishing, and plunge into the water after our fish.

We are odd-looking Birds and do not get our full colors until we are three years old.

Truly we are unusual Birds for we boast of a bill a foot long!

Your friend,
PELICAN."

Another letter read,
"Southern California.

Dear Friends:—

I am a very large bird with a great temper. I am thirteen inches long, black and white in plumage, and am named the 'Common Puffin'.

Sometimes I am spoken of as a Sea Parrot.

Please do not disturb me or I will become angry.

I hope you will admire my picture though I am so odd-looking.

Your friend,
Common Puffin."

The next letter read,

"Puget Sound.

Dear Friends:—

We are a flock of Gulls, and at present are resting on an ocean steamer. We



Old Fathar Bunny Did Not Know Whether the
Wise Old Owl Was Fooling or Not

fly long distances and eat fish.

We are happy to hear that you mean to protect all Birds.

Your friends,

The Wild Gulls."

There were so many other cards and letters the Bunnies could not read them all.

They read the names, though, of many Land and Water Birds. They received cards from the Crane Family, the Heron Family, the Pheasant Family, the Man-o'War Hawk and many others.

Old Father Bun said,

"My advice before you've heard,
But I'd learn the Order of every Bird;
I'd tell it in rhyme, and tell it in song,
To what Order does every Bird belong."

Old Mother Bun said,

"I'd learn the song of every bird,
So I could tell its name when heard."

Sam said,

“I’ll keep a chart you understand,
With Birds of the Water and Birds of
the Land.”

Polly said,

“Names of Birds and names of trees,
I will learn simple things like these.”

Healthy Bunny and Pretty Bunny
said,

“We are very glad that spring has come,
We are so happy to be home;
With all the Birds and bees and flowers,
We are happy in this world of ours.”

A Bird sang in the distance,

“Protect the Birds and love them, too,
I always sing, ‘Cuckoo, Cuckoo.’”

A voice answered,

“Who? Who? I quite agree with you,
Though I eat bats and a few Sparrows,
too;
I will send a little greeting
To your next Bird-Club meeting.”

Old Father Bun did not know whether
the Wise Old Owl was fooling or not.

CHAPTER X.

A BIRD-CLUB PLAY

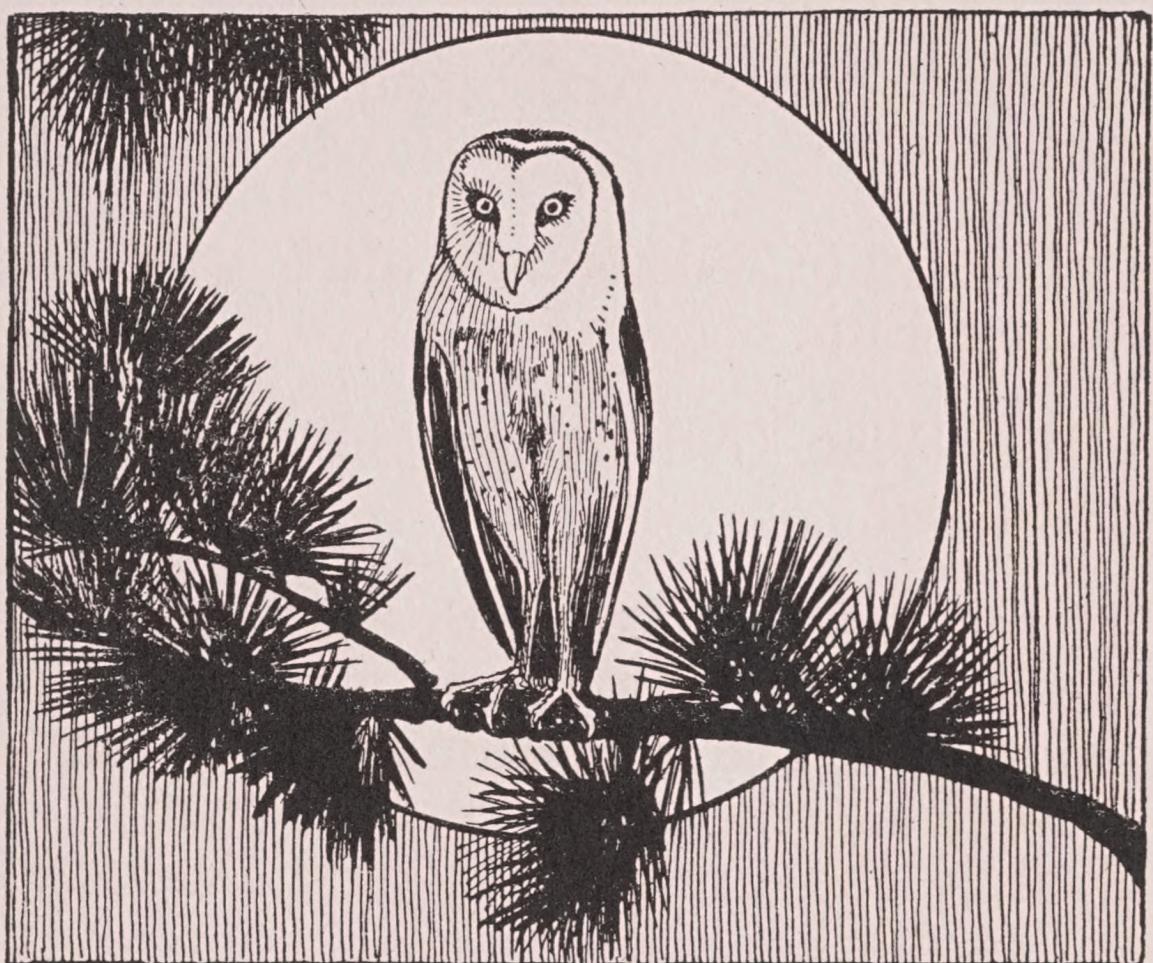
The Wise Old Owl said, "Any day
We can give a Bird-Club Play;
Wherever we go, whatever we do,
I'll introduce myself to you."

He began at once to tell a true story. He said that once upon a time he and his mate built a nest in a tall maple tree in Rountree Place, and one day his children, seven little Screech Owl, began to fly.

The Owls flew down to a locust tree and one, more full of adventure than the rest, flew down to a bird stand and stood beside the Bird-basin.

This little Owl was named "Columbus" because he was always going a little further than the others, trying to discover something new.

By and by a little girl came out of the



house near and actually offered Columbus a pan-cake, which he took, and it tasted very good.

The Wise Old Screech Owl, who told this story, continued, "I know I have an unpleasant voice, but I do not have to answer to such a queer name as the Barn Owl, who is also called 'Monkey-Faced.'

He screeched loudly and remarked, "I really don't care what you say, I always eat my entire prey!"

“Not feathers too?” said Old Father Bun.

“Not hair, bones and all?” said Old Mother Bun.

The Wise Owl nodded his head and continued,

“If you are troubled with rats and mice,
I will rid you of them in a trice.”

He said, “I’ve something else to say,
I work all night and rest all day.

I stole the Cardinal’s eggs, I’m sorry
to say,

But I’m not much worse than Mother
Blue Jay.”

He went on and told them that he had
two sets of eye-lids because he sometimes
wanted to use one set when the light
hurt him, and closed both sets when he
wanted to sleep.

He began to talk in rhyme again, which
pleased the Bunnies,

“Two sets of eye-lids you will see,
If you will closely look at me;
The second lids I close in sleep,
And into a hollow tree I creep;

When I hear the slightest sound,
My entire head I turn around;
My feathers help me, so they say,
To quietly approach my prey;
My feathery ear tufts are one inch long,
I whistle and call, but have no song."

Old Mother Bun said, "Did you really
steal the eggs of the beautiful Cardinal?"

The Wise Old Owl said,
"I did steal two eggs, I'm sorry to say,
But one was stolen by Mother Blue
Jay."

Old Father Bun was working away.

He made a real little theatre of paste-board.

He folded the board in the middle and opened it like a book. He drew on it pictures of trees so his little theatre represented the woods.

Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny wrote the posters to advertise the play.

A Play in Two Acts at Bird Centre.
Admission One Penny.

Old Father Bun made the Play Tickets which said,

A Penny Play.

Admit One.

Old Mother Bun made the Programs and they all worked at the story to be read while the Play was acted, and they all made pictures of Birds and the other characters for the Play, and they put standards on their characters so they would stand when placed in the Theatre.

Old Mother Bun set up the characters while Old Father Bun read the following Play:

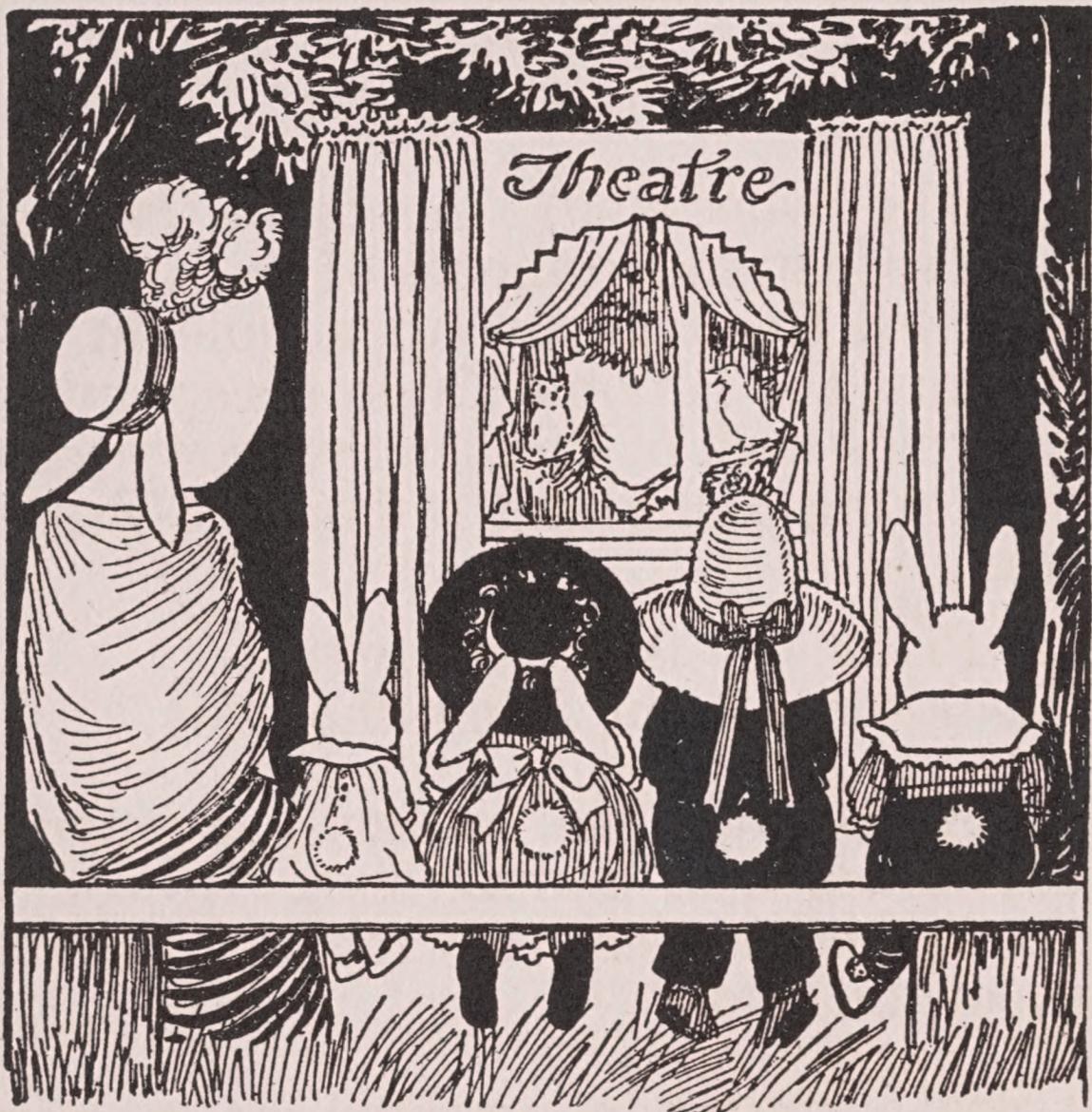
A PENNY PLAY FOR ARBOR DAY.
Scene 1. In The Woods.

The Red-Headed Woodpecker has come and says that spring is here. He calls out,

“I will tell you, if you don’t mind,
I’ve two toes in front and two behind.”

The Owl cries, “Who? who? who?” and says, in a sing-song kind of way,

“The Wise Owl says, whatever I do,
I always cry, ‘Tu-whit, tu-who.’”



Now, the Red-Headed Woodpecker is so gay with his red cap that he is readily seen and the Owl makes such a noise that the Terrible Tabby comes slyly creeping round one of the trees. If it was not for the bright eyes of Robin Red-Breast, they might not know that an enemy is approaching.

Robin Red-Breast cries,

“I sing, I sing, be careful, dear;
An enemy is drawing near.”

“Who? who? who?” shouts the Owl. He feels safe in the branches of the tall tree, the Red-Head goes into a hole in the tree and the Terrible Tabby creeps away.

A whole flock of English Sparrows come twittering along and Robin Red-Breast cries,

“A Bird’s life is not all joy;
Look out for the Sling-Shot Boy.”

Sure enough, see! a Boy has entered the woods with a sling shot. He comes nearer and nearer every minute. Will he shoot the birds?

See! a girl is coming down the opposite path. She is gayly dressed and has a hat completely covered with feathers.

The Boy meets the girl and says, “How do you do, Miss Fuss-and-Feathers?”

The Girl says, “How do you do, Sling-Shot Boy?”

The Birds feel sad to think how many

of their companions have been killed to make the covering for the Girl's hat.

Scene 2. In the Woods.

The Spirit of the Times comes into the woods.

Every leaf rustles a welcome.

Every Bird whistles and sings.

Every breeze carries the good news that the Spirit of the Times will befriend the Birds.

She whispers to the Boy, "Protect the Birds, form a club to study their haunts and habits, learn their secrets and soon you will love them. Let your motto be, 'Protect Birds from all enemies,' so they can say, 'A thoughtful friend threw us some crumbs, a kind person nailed up some suet. A skillful hand made us a house'."

To the Girl the Spirit of the Times speaks gently, "When you have put up your first Bird-House for a feathered friend, you will not want to use feathers for a decoration."

The Spirit of the Times speaks to the

Terrible Tabby with little effect, so she has a bell placed on his neck.

The Boy and Girl are glad to listen and learn.

Back into the woods come the Birds and sing in happy chorus. The Boy and Girl say,

“We will protect the Birds,
This we sing and say,
We will protect the Birds
On happy Arbor Day;
On Arbor Day and every day,
We'll love them as we should,
And so we give our little play
Of Birds and merry wood.”

The Spirit Of The Times says,
“It's love that makes the world go round,
No matter what we say;
It's love that makes the world go round
On happy Arbor Day.”

Only the Terrible Tabby still needs watching, and his little bell goes, “tinkle, tinkle, tinkle.”

“Play it again,” cried Polly.

“Play it again,” cried Sam.

Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny

clapped their paws and said, "What if the Terrible Tabby had not worn a bell? What if Robin Red-Breast had not had sharp eyes?"

At this very minute a great whirring of wings was heard and the Birds came one and all to give the Bunnies a surprise party.

Robin Red-Breast was so happy his little throat was fairly swelling with his merry song, and when a few drops of rain fell he said,

"Hear my merry, glad refrain,
I am singing in the rain."

The shower was soon over and the Wise Old Owl said, "Robin, you sing several songs, but not quite as many as the Catbird." Even then, the Catbird was imitating him!

The Blue Jay came scolding, as usual.

The Nuthatch and Junco started down the tree, for the shower was over. The Swallows and Sparrows and Mourning-Dove came, too, and the Cedar Waxwing stopped for a minute.



The Sparrows were amused to see that most of the company enjoyed a bath in the Bird Basin, for they only took dust baths.

The Wren, and Bluebird, and Humming Bird added to the merriment. The Blackbird, Pewee, and Grosbeak helped make up the party and the Brown Creeper was almost late.

The Crow added to the excitement by whispering to the Wise Old Owl who shouted out the secret,

“We have a present for Old Mother Bun;
We have contributed to it, every one.”

It was Old Mother Bun’s birthday, and the jolly little songsters had brought her a canary in a cage.

As the canary had been born in a cage it was perfectly contented there.

Old Mother Bun said,

“I will love the canary gay,
And feed and water him every day,
And I know that I shall laugh
To see him in his tiny bath.”

The Cardinal said, “It is very different to cage a wild bird like me. I am glad to be free, but the poor little canary would not know what to do if he were let out of his cage and he would be afraid even of wild canaries, so he is contented in his cage.”

After a while the Feathered Friends bade the Bunnies good bye, and Polly and Sam said,

“To love and protect all Birds we'll try;
Father and Mother Bun, good bye.”

Pretty Bunny and Healthy Bunny
went to bed.

Old Father Bun said,

“We'll write a letter 'ere set of sun,
And invite the song birds, every one;
We'll give invitation hearty
To an out-door garden party.”

Old Mother Bun had planted a wonderful garden. She said,

“I find friends the wide world over;
I am truly a great Bird Lover.”

The Up-to-Date Bunny peeped in the window and looked at the canary, saying,

“How wonderful that he, too, can sing,
And just be glad of everything;
Such a beautiful song from a little
throat!
There is melody in every note.”

Old Father and Mother Bun were sleepy.

Their heads went *nid-nid* nodding.

The Up-to-Date Bunny called to the Sandman passing by,

“Birds again! Birds again!
In the sunlight, in the rain,
A flash of wings, a breast that gleams
Bring us all some happy dreams!”

“We’ll hold this motto high above,
We’ll all protect the Birds we love.”

The Sandman took a dream out of his sack and said, waving a flag,

He went on his way and Old Father and Mother Bun had a wonderful dream of Birdland.

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